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INTELLIGENCE VERSUS IMPULSE: WILLIAM H. SEWARD AND THE THREAT OF WAR WITH FRANCE OVER MEXICO, 1861 – 1867

BY

ALBERT JOSEPH GRIFFIN, JR.
B.A. YALE UNIVERSITY, 1968
M.A. TUFTS UNIVERSITY, 1974

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirement for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
History

May, 2003

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4/30/03
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DEDICATION

To my family, my students, and anyone who has willingly undertaken a significant challenge later in life.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Although my name appears on the title page, this is a work to which many have contributed. To my dissertation advisor, classroom mentor, fellow basketball player, and bird lover, Professor Kurk Dorsey, go my most heartfelt thanks. There are very good reasons why he is a perennial favorite among both undergraduate and graduate students at the University of New Hampshire. Among the other members of my committee, Professor J. William Harris, UNH History Department Chair, has also been most generous with his time and wisdom. Professors Marco Dorfsman and Julia Rodriguez made certain that the bright light of Seward did not force Mexico into the shadows. Finally, Professor Alan K. Henrikson of the Fletcher School at Tufts, where I got my first introduction to diplomatic history, was kind enough to assist me with this project from both Medford, Massachusetts and Vienna, Austria, many years after he first had me in class. Dr. Michael J. Lee of UNH's Teaching Excellence Program has been supportive throughout, as have been UNH Graduate School Deans Dr. Bruce L. Mallory and Dr. Harry J. Richards, who provided me assistance for summer research in Mexico. Dr. Gerald Collins and Team 1 were also instrumental in keeping me going.

This dissertation would also not have come to fruition had it not been for the assistance of various librarians and curators of special collections. I would thus like to thank Sra. Elvira Morales Juárez, coordinator of Special Collections at the University of the Americas in Cholula Mexico, Mary Huth who supervises the Seward Collection at the University of Rochester, and Alicia Clarke, curator of the Sanford Museum in Sanford, Florida where Henry S. Sanford's papers are housed. Regarding the latter, Professor Joseph "Andy" Fry of the University of Nevada was most generous in loaning me microfilm that he had used in preparing his book on Henry S. Sanford, one of Seward's favorite diplomats. UNH reference librarian Peter Crosby has been unfailingly helpful, and those in UNH's Inter-Library Loan Department never let me down, even though I

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rarely saw them. Walter V. Hickey of the National Archives in Waltham, Massachusetts was indispensable in helping me navigate through the maze of microfilmed diplomatic correspondence housed there.

The UNH History professors for whom I worked as a teaching assistant provided valuable professional insights, as well as a needed sense of perspective at critical junctures, as did my fellow teaching assistants in Horton 327, especially Kathryn Askins, Pete Leavenworth, and Eric Kimball. To those in UNH's Spanish Department, notably Lina Lee, Lori Hopkins, Marco Dorfsman, Mary Belford, and Elisa Stoykavich, I say *muchísimas gracias* for bringing my Spanish from the rudimentary to the minimally acceptable. Mike Wallsten, and Eric and Claudia Gueguen helped me understand the Spanish I was hearing in Mexico that was not always as elegant as that which I heard in UNH classrooms. I should also like to acknowledge the assistance of Professor William Taylor of Plymouth State College, now deceased, who helped me get back into academic history after a career in the U.S. Foreign Service.

The entire dissertation is dedicated to my family, both immediate and far-flung, and my many friends. I've opted not to name anyone in particular for fear of committing the unpardonable gaffe of leaving someone out. Without their collective encouragement and support, this dissertation, and just about everything else, would not have been possible. May they share in whatever credit may be forthcoming, but if any errors remain herein, they are mine alone.

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CHRONOLOGY

5/16/1801	William Henry Seward born in Florida, New York
3/21/1806	Benito Juárez born in San Paulo Guelatao, Oaxaca
1808	Louis Napoleon, future Napoleon III born in Paris
1837	Matías Romero born in Oaxaca, Oaxaca
1846-1848	Mexican-American War
1848	Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo
1848	Louis Napoleon elected President of French Republic
12/2/1851	Louis Napoleon declares himself Napoleon III, ends French Republic and begins Second Empire
1849-1861	Seward's term as U.S. Senator from New York
12/24/1859	Matías Romero arrives in Washington, D.C. as Secretary to the Mexican Legation
1858-1861	War of the Reform in Mexico
1/1861	Juárez re-entered Mexico City as victor in War of the Reform; declared moratorium on Mexican debt-payments to foreigners
3/1861-3/1869	Seward serves as U.S. Secretary of State
3/4/1861	Lincoln inaugurated; among appointees: Charles Francis Adams, Minister to London, William Dayton, Minister to Paris, Thomas Corwin, Minister to Mexico, John L. Motley Minister to Vienna
1861-1865	Civil War in the United States
10/31/1861	Convention of London between Great Britain, France, and Spain
12/1861- 2/1862	Arrival of European troops in Mexico
4/9-15/1862	Spanish and British forces leave Mexico after Orizaba meeting

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5/5/1862	Mexican forces defeat French at Puebla
10/30/1862	French Foreign Minister Drouyn de Lhuys proposes that France, Great Britain and Russia broker a six-month cease-fire between the Union and the Confederacy
11/1862	Russia and Great Britain politely turn down the French offer
12/1862	Attempt by Radical Republicans to oust Seward from the Cabinet
5/17/1863	French take Puebla
6/1863	Liberal Government of Benito Juárez flees north to San Luis Potosi
6/7/1863	French troops, under General Achille Bazaine, enter Mexico City
1/1864	Juárez Government traveling between Saltillo and Monterrey
4/10/1864	Maximilian signs Treaty of Miramar
5/28/64	U.S. Minister Thomas Corwin leaves Mexico
6/12/1864	Maximilian and Carlota arrive in Mexico City
10/1864	Juárez Government in Chihuahua, Chihuahua
11/1864	Lincoln re-elected, Seward continues as Secretary of State
12/1864	U.S. Minister Dayton dies in Paris, replaced by John Bigelow
4/1865	Confederate Surrender at Appomattox; Assassination of Lincoln, attempted assassination of Seward; first overtures from Napoleon III about possible withdrawal of troops from Mexico.
6/21/1865	Frances Seward, wife, dies at fifty-nine
8/1865	Seward meets with General John Schofield about diplomatic mission to Paris
10/3/1865	Maximilian decree calling for summary execution of captured Juáristas
11/1865	Schofield finally leaves for Paris
12/1865	Gen. John Logan refuses assignment as U.S. Minister to Mexico

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1/15/1866	Napoleon III notifies Maximilian by letter that French forces will withdraw by 1867.
1/22/1866	Napoleon III makes the same announcement publicly in front of French Parliament
5/4/1866	Lewis D. Campbell confirmed as new U.S. Minister to Mexico
7/9/1866	Carlota leaves for Europe to plead Maximilian's case
8/28 – 9/17/1866	"Swing Around the Circle" – political campaign trip for Andrew Johnson, accompanied by Seward, Grant, Welles, Romero, etc.
10/1866	Fanny Seward, daughter, dies of tuberculosis at twenty-one
11/10/1866	Lewis Campbell and Gen. William Sherman leave New York for Mexico
11/23/1866	Seward sends longest and most expensive transatlantic telegram to date insisting that Napoleon III keep to agreed upon timetable for French troop withdrawal
11/25/1866	Maximilian decides not to abdicate
11/28 – 12/5/1866	Campbell and Sherman along Mexico's Gulf Coast
12/1866 – 2/1867	Juárez moving southward from Chihuahua to San Luis Potosi
2/13/1867	Maximilian leaves Mexico City for Queretaro
3/12/1867	All foreign troops embark for Europe from Veracruz
5/15/1867	Maximilian captured
6/1/1867	Seward orders Campbell, resident in New Orleans, to Mexico to find Juárez and plead for clemency for Maximilian
6/13/1867	Beginning of trial of Maximilian and Generals Mejia and Miramon
6/19/1867	Maximilian, Mejia and Miramon executed in Queretaro
7/15/1867	Juárez triumphantly enters Mexico City and re-establishes Mexican Republic

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3/1869	Seward replaced by Hamilton Fish at State Department
10/1869 – 1/1870	Seward's visit to Mexico
8/9/1870 – 10/1871	Seward's trip around the world
10/10/1872	Seward dies at seventy-one
9/1870	Napoleon III captured by Prussians
1873	Napoleon III dies in exile in England
12/30/1898	Matías Romero dies in Mexico at sixty-one

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ABSTRACT

INTELLIGENCE VERSUS IMPULSE: WILLIAM H. SEWARD AND THE THREAT OF WAR WITH FRANCE OVER MEXICO, 1861-1867

by

Albert J. Griffin, Jr.

University of New Hampshire, May, 2003

This dissertation argues that U.S. Secretary of State William Seward conceived a diplomatic strategy that enabled the U.S. to oust the French and their puppet emperor, Maximilian, from Mexico in 1867. The genius in Seward's approach lay in accomplishing this goal without committing U.S. forces. Using original diplomatic correspondence, this dissertation shows how Seward capitalized on both the weaknesses of the French, and the strengths of republican Mexico. It demonstrates how Seward bargained for the time needed for his strategy to work, even when many around him were pressing for precipitous action. It argues that Seward's diplomatic strategy succeeded in spite of challenges from both foreign and internal critics. A review of Seward's interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine is included because the establishment of a monarchy in Mexico by France was the first major violation of the tenets of that pronouncement.

The dissertation is neither a Seward biography nor a hagiography. Many of Seward's mistakes are catalogued, such as when he suggested to President Abraham Lincoln in April 1861 that foreign wars might be an antidote to national dissolution. It does assert, however, that in matters broadly related to foreign affairs during the administrations of Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson, Seward had a masterful command of both strategy and tactics.

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In a related vein, the dissertation endeavors to delineate the active role that republican Mexicans played in their own liberation, focussing on the efforts of President Benito Juárez and his Minister in Washington, Don Matías Romero.

Finally, a case is made for Seward's prescience. An avowed expansionist, Seward saw the growing power of the U.S. in economic rather than military terms. Seward can be seen as the father of the concept of U.S. economic hegemony, in that he believed that an expanding industrial economy inevitably brings not only economic benefits, but also social and political ones, a concept that ultimately failed to resonate in Mexico. That fact leads to the question posed in the Conclusion: how could the amicable relations that existed between the U.S. and Mexico after France's departure have deteriorated so badly through most of the twentieth century?

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INTRODUCTION

"Seward acts from intelligence, Grant from impulse."

Gideon Welles, June 16, 1865

At the end of its Civil War, the United States could have easily gone to war to expel the French from Mexico. That potential conflict did not take place largely due to the efforts of William Henry Seward, Secretary of State to U.S. Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson. Democrats in Congress were invoking the Monroe Doctrine as the rationale to physically evict the French, and the U.S. Army, with General Ulysses S. Grant in Washington and General Philip Sheridan along the Rio Grande, were ready and willing to do so. Republican Mexicans themselves were negotiating U.S. military involvement, although, as might well be expected, under terms favorable to Mexico. The French forces in northern Mexico supporting the *soi-disant* emperor, Maximilian von Hapsburg, were crumbling along with Maximilian's Mexican supporters. From all accounts, particularly those of Sheridan himself, the military part of evicting the French would have been easy. Yet it did not happen, and this dissertation questions why.

At the time that this drama unfolded, those politically active in Mexico were divided into roughly two camps. The Liberals, led by President Don Benito Juárez, wanted a government based essentially on Enlightenment principles.[1] They wanted the

[1] The Juárez government is called Liberal, his supporters Juaristas. The Juárez government defeated the Conservatives under Miguel Miramón in the War of Reform, 1858-1861. When Maximilian arrived in 1864, his government will be called the Empire and will co-exist with that of Juárez. Among the major works on D. (Don) Benito Juárez, sometime called the "*Benemérito de las Américas*" (the meritorious Latin American) are Justo Sierra's *Juárez: Su Obra y Su Tiempo*, a massive five-hundred folio pages published in 1905-06. It is a compelling narrative, but its usefulness for the researcher is limited by its total lack of footnotes. Ralph Roeder's *Juárez and his Mexico*, in two volumes, published in 1947, has a bibliography

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rule of law, and freedom from the suffocating omnipresence of the Catholic Church in Mexico's secular affairs. They also wanted an end to the excesses of the military and the extravagances of its leaders, both typified by General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. They envisioned a Mexico freed from the constraints of a caste system based on slavish preconception of Spanish superiority. Finally, the Liberals wanted to be free of foreign intervention. They did not want the French to rule their country through the puppet emperor, Maximilian, but neither did they want the U.S. to dominate their affairs. Nor did the Mexicans want to lose any more land than that which had already been lost through the Mexican-American War and the Gadsden Purchase. Liberal Mexicans actively sought U.S. assistance in ousting the French, but they had no intention of trading a French intervention for an American one. The dissertation endeavors to show how such a delicate balance was ultimately achieved, in spite of contradictory actions by both sides.

The second Mexican group operated under the umbrella appellation of "Conservatives." It consisted mostly of those who stood to lose wealth or power under Liberal reforms. The military in general, and supporters of discredited dictator, General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, in particular, the powerful members of the Catholic clergy, and those who benefited directly from the caste system that provided preferences based on the degree of one's "Spanishness," numbered prominently among Conservatives. There were also the foreign speculators in Mexico's financial affairs who stood to profit under Conservative rule. Whereas the Liberals turned to the U.S. for assistance, the Conservatives turned to Europe, especially to France. Thus the problems

---

and an index, but again lacks footnotes. Jasper Ridley's *Maximilian and Juárez*, published in 1992, has endnotes, but both the Roeder and Ridley works read more like historical novels than monographs. Two monographs on Juárez that are well-footnoted are Ivie Cadenhead's *Benito Juárez*, published in 1973, and Brian Hamnett's *Juárez*, published in 1994. The latter provides considerably more analysis than biography. Fernando Benitez's *Un indio zapoteco llamado Benito Juárez*, published in 1998, is essentially a hagiography, and Celerino Salmeron's *Las grandes traiciones de Juárez*, whose tenth edition was published in 1986, sees Juárez as an anticlerical villain who targeted the Catholic Church, and made treaties with foreigners, particularly the U.S., that were inimical to Mexico. Juárez's familial concerns find extensive expression in Benito Juárez, *Archivos Privados de D. Benito Juárez y D. Pedro Santacilia*, a compilation of messages between Juárez and his son-in-law. Full citations can be found in the bibliography.

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that President Lincoln and Secretary of State Seward had to deal with in ultimately getting the French out of Mexico entailed multiple dissident layers in all of the countries involved.

Only one single study, now almost a century old, focuses exclusively on Seward's role in developing and implementing a strategy to remove the French from Mexico without using military force.[2] No published studies in English on the specific problem of the French in Mexico try to incorporate the Mexican perspective. In the late 1800s, it was fashionable among historical writers to view Seward as the exclusive architect of the salvation of republican Mexico. For example, in 1892, Henry Cabot Lodge wrote:

> At home the disposition was to consider Seward over-cautious. Abroad, the reverse was the case. In reality Seward's policy was both bold and aggressive, and yet was so tempered by prudence that it never degenerated into rashness. He convinced foreign powers of our readiness to fight, which was of inestimable value, and which enabled us better than anything else to keep clear of actual hostilities. This comes out very strongly in the treatment of the Mexican question.[3]

A few years later, Frederic Bancroft continued in the same vein:

> This much is certain: to Seward belongs the chief credit for expelling those who were violating the Monroe doctrine, for restoring republicanism in Mexico, and for averting war with France that might have been no less terrible than the Civil War, and might even have led to a renewal of that terrible conflict.[4]

An effort is made in this study to correct the misperception, exhibited in the foregoing citations, that Seward deserves all of the credit for expelling the French. There is also an effort to show that both presidents Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson

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[2] James M. Callahan, *Evolution of Seward's Mexican Policy,* Morgantown: W. Virginia U. Press, 1909.
[3] Henry Cabot Lodge, *Historical and Political Essays,* Cambridge, MA: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1892, p. 43.
[4] Frederic Bancroft, *The Life of William H. Seward, 2 vols.,* NY: Harper & Bros., 1900, II, pp. 441-42.

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acceded to, but did not initiate, most of Seward's diplomatic efforts, particularly those regarding Mexico. In so doing, the dissertation's findings disagree with the opposite premise, contained in Jay Monaghan's *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Affairs: A Diplomat in Carpet Slippers,* and Dean Mahin's *One War at a Time: The International Dimensions of the American Civil War.*[5]

One note about method is in order. Working with diplomatic exchanges poses a unique set of problems, because document collections do not match up outgoing messages with incoming messages. Given the time lag of transatlantic correspondence of on average five or six weeks during the period covered by the dissertation, there is often a significant disjunction between an "Instruction" from Seward and a "Despatch" from William Dayton or John Bigelow in Paris. The diplomatic dialog is often overtaken by intervening events. This is particularly the case for events involving Mexico and the U.S. during the months when the Juárez government was in flight, and again just before Maximilian's execution. The researcher frequently finds himself utilizing two or three adjacent microfilm machines to track outgoing and incoming messages. The problem became more complicated when Seward issued "Circular" messages that required responses from many U.S. legations.

Another problem was keeping diplomatic correspondence numbers in order. Those emanating from the State Department, "Instructions," kept the numbering order rather rigorously. By contrast, because of an early oversight, the "Despatches" of U.S. Minister to Mexico Lewis Campbell had to be renumbered, thus creating a researching nightmare when Seward referenced one of Campbell's incorrectly numbered messages.

The complexity increases exponentially when trying to match U.S. initiatives and responses with those of other governments, where the same issues of time lags and

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[5] Jay Monaghan, *Abraham Lincoln Deals with Foreign Affairs: A Diplomat in Carpet Slippers,* Lincoln, NE: U. of Nebraska Press, 1997, reissue of 1945 edition, entitled *Diplomat in Carpet Slippers*; Dean Mahin, *One War at a Time: The International Dimensions of the American Civil War,* Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2000.

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sequential numbering of correspondence exist. Writing this dissertation has been a complicated enterprise of trying to triangulate the evidence contained in several stories, all happening more or less simultaneously - France in Mexico, Juárez's reaction to France and Maximilian, and Seward's response to both in the context of the Civil War and the early days of Reconstruction. Hence some overlapping and backtracking have persisted in the text, despite an effort to keep the treatment of these main threads in loosely chronological order.

A weakness in the study is that due to constraints of time and resources, it was not possible to travel to France to consult the French archives. It was possible to work around this problem, to some degree, thanks to Michele Cunningham's *Mexico and the Foreign Policy of Napoleon III*, in which she quotes liberally in French from the original sources. Using the original French of Napoleon III's important July 1862 letter to his commander in Mexico, General Forey, outlining Napoleon III's objectives, made possible a comparison with excerpts from the letter translated into English, contained in Alfred and Kathryn Hanna's *Napoleon III and Mexico.*[6] Complete hardbound copies of Matias Romero's ten-volume *Correspondencia de la Legación mexicana durante la intervención extranjera* are also relatively rare. One was consulted at Special Collections of the University of the Americas library in Cholula, Mexico in the summers of 2000 and 2001. However, Inter-Library Loan at the University of New Hampshire was able to acquire a microfilmed copy from the Library of Congress. Thomas and Ebba Schoonover have provided important excerpts from the *Correspondencia*, translated into English, in their *Mexican Lobby: Matias Romero in Washington, 1861-1867.*[7] Both the microfilm

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[6] Michele Cunningham, *Mexico and the Foreign Policy of Napoleon III*, NY: Palgrave, 2001, p. 126; Alfred and Kathryn Hanna, *Napoleon III and Mexico: American Triumph Over Monarchy*, Chapel Hill, NC: U. of N. Carolina Press, 1971, Chapter 7.

[7] Matías Romero, *Correspondencia de la Legación mexicana en Washington durante la intervención extranjera, 1860-1868, 10 vols.*, Mexico City: Imprenta del Gobierno, 1870-92; Thomas Schoonover, *Mexican Lobby: Matías Romero in Washington, 1861-1867*, Lexington, KY: U. Press of Kentucky, 1986.

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copy of the *Correspondencia*, and the Schoonover text were used in assessing Romero's observations.

The problem facing the Mexicans that represents the starting point for this dissertation was the sending of French troops to Mexico in the winter of 1861-1862 as part of a debt-collecting mission that included the British and Spanish.[8] The Mexican government, under Liberal president Benito Juárez, had declared a general moratorium on debt payments, citing imminent bankruptcy and a suspicion of fraudulent practices in the previous Conservative administration. Britain held the bulk of Mexico's public debt, but France was vigorously prosecuting the financial claims of some of its private citizens against the Mexican government. Lesser amounts were owed to Spain. All three signed an agreement in October 1861, referred to as the Convention of London (also as the Tripartite Agreement), under which the signatories would assume control of Mexico's customs houses in order to collect the money due them. The Agreement specifically limited the expeditionary forces to the collection of debt and expressly forbade intervention in Mexican internal affairs [see Appendix III, Article II].

The U.S. had been invited to join the Convention, as American citizens had claims against Mexico as well, but refused. The U.S. had somewhat of an ambivalent policy regarding taking advantage of Mexico's prostrate financial position. Aligning itself with the Tripartite Convention was out of the question, as it would be seen domestically as an unnatural alliance between republicans and monarchists to exploit Mexico. It would have been unwise for Lincoln to commit troops for debt-collection as manpower needs for the Union were about to escalate. Insofar as France and Britain had recognized Confederate belligerency, diplomatic relations between the U.S. and two of the three Tripartite powers were already strained. There were many reasons for the U.S.

[8] The entire episode of France's military presence in Mexico is referred to as the "French Intervention" in English, *la intervención francesa*, in Spanish. See Ernesto de la Torre Villar, *La Intervención Francesa y el Triunfo de la República, Tomo I*, Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1968. The entire title of Romero's *Correspondencia* refers to the *intervención extranjera*, "foreign intervention." That was because it began, when there were three countries involved in the armed occupation of Mexico's customs houses.

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not joining the debt-collecting mission, not all of them altruistic. Finally, the loans already offered to Mexico always had strings attached, generally in the form of Mexican land as collateral for American money.[9]

Seward was also troubled by the presence of European troops on the southern border of the U.S. at a time of great internal upheaval. He could not object to the European mission on legal grounds, because the seizing of customs houses for debt repayment was an accepted practice in the nineteenth century. He additionally worried about the "permanency of the Mexican Republic," and the implications that such a debt-collecting mission might have for other new republican governments in the Western Hemisphere. Accordingly, in September 1861, he wrote to his Minister in Paris, William Dayton:

> This Government has learned from information which leaves no room for doubt that an armed movement is being prepared by . . . Great Britain and France to proceed to Vera Cruz with a view to make demands of some nature upon Mexico . . . this Government takes so deep an interest in the permanency of the Mexican Republic that it is even not unwilling to render it some extraordinary good offices in its present emergency . . . The President desires you to inform . . . France that this Government looks with deep concern to the subject of the armed movement to which I have thus directed your attention, and to ask Mr. Thouvenel [French Foreign Minister] for such explanations of it as His Imperial Majesty [Napoleon

[9] Negotiated in 1859, the McLane-Ocampo treaty would have loaned $4 million to Mexico to help with its debt problems. In return, the U.S. would have received "rights of way" for railroads in northern Mexico and across the Tehuantepec isthmus in the south. The "deal-breaker" for the Mexicans was the provision that U.S. troops could intervene, without Mexico's consent, to protect these rights of way. The "deal-breaker" for the Northerners was the possibility that slavery could be more easily extended via the railroads proposed for northern Mexico. In 1859, the Senate defeated the proposal 27-18. Samuel Flagg Bemis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States, 4th ed.*, NY: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1955, p 391n. Upon taking office as Secretary of State, Seward authorized his Minister to Mexico, Thomas Corwin to buy Baja California in order to provide Mexico with quick cash. When Mexico refused to sell Baja, Seward and Corwin tried to arrange for loans to cover Mexico's public debt. These loans all had "land-as-collateral" provisions and were unacceptable to the legislative bodies in both countries. They will be dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 1.

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III] may feel at liberty to give with a view to the satisfaction of the United States and the preservation of peace in this hemisphere.[10]

This first excerpt from Seward's "Instructions" indicates several themes that will be repeated throughout the entire encounter with the French in Mexico. Seward initially referred to "information that leaves no room for doubt," indicating he had sources, some official and some unofficial, and Napoleon did not have to know exactly who or what they were. Secondly, the message expressed "so deep an interest" in the welfare of the "Mexican Republic" that the U.S. was willing to "render it some extraordinary good offices." Seward stated from the beginning that the survival of republican Mexico was a priority for the U.S. and that the U.S. would work actively to maintain its existence. Seward expressed "deep concern" regarding "armed movement" as a way of settling any disputes, a principle he would maintain throughout the French intervention. Finally, he politely asked for an explanation, through the proper diplomatic channels, because he was interested in "the preservation of peace in this hemisphere." This last phrase indicated that Seward saw European intervention as not purely a Mexican problem. Seward was sensitive to the fate of the other new republics in the Western Hemisphere, and he wanted to be sure to underline that European armed intervention anywhere in the hemisphere would pose problems for the United States.[11] In so doing, he made subtle reference to what had come to be known as the Monroe Doctrine, without invoking it overtly. Most of the elements of Seward's subsequent policy towards the French in Mexico are contained here: the tone was polite, the devotion to republican governments underscored,

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[10]Seward to Dayton, September 24, 1861, #60 (serial message number), National Archives, Diplomatic Records, Instructions, France: M (microfilm publication #) 77, R (record #) 56, pp. 57-8. Seward's messages to his diplomats are preserved under "Instructions." Replies from abroad are listed under "Despatches" and are catalogued by the country where they originated. See *Diplomatic Records: A Select Catalog of National Archives Microfilm Publications,* Washington D.C.: National Archives Trust Fund Board, National Archives and Records Administration, 1986. "Vera Cruz" is often used in the 19th century. Veracruz is the modern usage.

[11] Lester Langley, *The Americas in the Age of Revolution 1750 – 1850,* New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1996, Ch. 12, especially pp. 279-80

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the willingness to help those governments clearly stated, and the preference for diplomatic solutions rather than military ones affirmed.

There was also a straightforward presentation of the U.S. position. Seward was not unwise to the ways of diplomacy, but he was not consciously duplicitous in his official correspondence. This straightforwardness contrasted sharply with the diplomatic approach taken by Napoleon III, who had sent his army into Mexico for more than debt collection.[12] He had an ulterior plan to set up a monarchy in Mexico that was pro-French, pro-Catholic and pro-military. This government would replace the republican government of Benito Juárez and his Liberals, which was based on just the opposite: independence from foreign domination, democracy, and strict limits on the military and the Catholic Church.

Hence the stage was set for the conflict between the Liberals who were seeking U.S. support, and the Conservatives who were already supported by France. Seward would steadfastly support Juárez and republican principles while Napoleon III schemed to restore monarchy and the primacy of the Catholic Church.[13] By having sent troops to collect debts, Napoleon III made possible an eventual armed conflict between the U.S and France. Working in consultation with President Lincoln, it fell primarily to Seward and his diplomats to make sure that the situation in Mexico did not escalate into an armed conflict involving the U.S. that would have long-term negative ramifications for all three countries.

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[12] Born Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (1808-1873), third son of King Louis and Queen Hortense of Holland. The nephew of Napoleon I, called Louis Napoleon before proclaiming himself Emperor of the French in 1852, visited the U.S. after being exiled from France for trying to overthrow King Louis Philippe in 1836.

[13] Mexico's eleven-year war of independence ended when Agustín Iturbide took over from Spanish representative Juan de O' Donoju via the Treaty of Cordoba in 1821. Less than a year later, he had himself named "constitutional emperor" by the Mexican Congress on May 19, 1822. It is in this sense that Maximilian would have "restored" the monarchy. Ten months later, in February 1823, Emperor Agustín I abdicated in the face of military opposition. Strictly speaking, this means that Maximilian was independent Mexico's *second* emperor. Meyer, *Course of Mexican History*, pp. 283-95.

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Seward's fears were realized when the French finally succeeded in setting up a monarchy in 1864 under Austrian archduke Ferdinand Maximilian von Hapsburg. The U.S. had a policy in place for dealing with such a contingency since 1823. Articulated by President James Monroe in December of 1823 in his annual message to Congress, it asserted that:

> The American continents . . . are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers. . .we owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere.[14]

The policy was largely formulated by one of Seward's predecessors as Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, as both a warning to Russia in Alaska and to the European powers not to try to reassert themselves in the newly liberated Latin American republics. European powers generally regarded the 1823 announcement as both arrogant and laughable, coming as it did from the U.S., a military midget at the time. It was not even called the Monroe Doctrine until 1853.[15] It became a factor for Seward and Congress in their dealings with the French in Mexico, but Seward did not refer to the Doctrine by name in his official correspondence.

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[14] Dexter Perkins, *A History of the Monroe Doctrine,* Boston: Little, Brown, 1963, pp. 391. Perkins states that President Polk, in 1845, was the first to resuscitate the Doctrine regarding British in Oregon "precisely twenty-two years after the enunciation of the original. . ." Perkins notes that French Prime Minister Guizot was the first, in 1846, to denounce "the pretension of the United States to the hegemony of the New World." British opinion at the time echoed that of Guizot. In the 1860s, Seward knew that publicly invoking the doctrine would only further irritate his European adversaries. Nevertheless, Perkins argues that the principles contained in the Doctrine, particularly that of European non-intervention in the New World, were the basis for much of Seward's policy toward the French in Mexico. Dexter Perkins, *The Monroe Doctrine 1826-1867,* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1933, pp. 87 & 117. See also Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History,* NY: Vintage, 1966, pp. 14-17, 204, 206, 220.

[15] "For the first time . . . in the [Congressional] debates of 1853, the declaration of 1823 becomes the Monroe *Doctrine* [italics in original]. In earlier discussions the references are almost invariably to 'principles' of Mr. Monroe, or to the "'Monroe declaration'." Ibid., p. 99.

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Seward revered John Quincy Adams, and there can be little doubt that he was completely familiar with the ideas that Adams had laid out when he served as President Monroe's Secretary of State. Seward had visited Europe prior to joining the Lincoln Administration, and he may have known that citing the "Doctrine" would only antagonize those in power, particularly British Prime Minister Palmerston. He may have also chosen not mention the Doctrine by name in his initial correspondence with his counterparts in Europe because, at the outset, the avowed intention of the Tripartite Alliance was to collect debts, not to change Mexico's political system. It was only with the installation of Maximilian as Emperor of Mexico in 1864 that the Doctrine received its most serious challenge in the four decades since its articulation.[16]

Under normal circumstances, the United States might have acted more quickly and forcefully when the Tripartite troops disembarked in Mexico in the winter of 1861-1862. However, by this time the U.S. was fully occupied with its own civil war, an enterprise so taxing for President Lincoln that he could not turn his full attention to Napoleon III's schemes in Mexico. Indeed, in assessing cause and effect, it may have been that the Tripartite nations chose to move on Mexico when they did precisely because the U.S. was otherwise engaged. With the president primarily absorbed with domestic matters, the burden of formulating U.S. policy toward European intrigues fell to Seward. He was convinced that a European monarchy imposed on Mexico and kept in power by French troops could not last indefinitely. However, such a monarchy and the presence of French troops on the southern border of the U.S. could cause considerable trouble while the Civil War raged on. Seward's principal dilemma was that the means at his disposal for removing these troops, and returning Mexico to constitutional government, were extremely limited during the war years.

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[16] He was named Emperor after a fraudulent plebiscite conducted by the French Army, see Jasper Ridley, *Maximilian and Juárez*, NY: Ticknor & Fields, 1992, pp. 156-7. Ridley notes that 6,445,564 Mexicans voted for Maximilian as emperor out of a total population of 8,620,892, roughly a 75% turnout, clearly impossible in Mexico in 1864.

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He ultimately chose a two-step approach to pressure the French to leave Mexico without actually engaging them militarily. The first step utilized traditional diplomacy, "masterful inactivity" in the words of James Callahan.[17] This approach, however, did not consist of doing nothing. Instead, Seward, in a series of messages, systematically erected the U.S. case against French activity in Mexico, first to French Foreign Minister Antoine Edouard Thouvenel and then to his successor, Edouard Drouyn de Lhuys. Seward re-iterated that the U.S. would never accept in Mexico a monarchy installed by a foreign power. He tempered this approach with assurances to France that the U.S. valued its long-term friendly bilateral relationship. A theme that Seward emphasized throughout this phase was how foolish it would be for France and the U.S., whose ties of friendship went back to the American Revolution, to become enemies over what Seward described as an "embarrassment" in Mexico.

Seward was also careful not to affront French honor publicly. Seward had met Napoleon III twice before becoming Secretary of State, once in the U.S. and once in France, and sensed that challenging him directly, particularly where the honor of the French military was involved, would only cause Napoleon to become more intransigent about keeping his troops in Mexico. Seward was convinced Napoleon III would fight the U.S. over Mexico if French honor were publicly questioned, regardless of the costs. Mexican Minister Matias Romero, reporting to his government in 1864 on a conversation with Postmaster-General Montgomery Blair, wrote:

> Blair mentioned that the United States government wanted to avoid involving the pride of the French nation in the Mexican conflict. Until now . . . this war was unpopular in France . . . if the French government is left to fight internal discontent and the opposition in the Corps Legislatif [French parliament], this government [U.S.] believes, it will soon find itself compelled to withdraw the

[17] James M. Callahan, *American Foreign Policy in Mexican Relations*, NY: Cooper Square, 1967, p. 292. See also Callahan's *Evolution of Seward's Mexican Policy*, Morgantown, W.V., W. Virginia U. Studies, 1909.

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expedition. If the United States intervenes in the matter and requests withdrawal of the expedition, however, French national pride will be offended, and under these circumstances the emperor would find sufficient grounds not only to prolong his Mexican intervention indefinitely, but even to make war on the United States.[18]

When the Civil War finally ended in 1865, Seward moved to the second phase of his strategy: saber rattling. President Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, supported the efforts of both Seward and Lieutenant General Ulysses Grant, commander-in-chief of the U.S. Army, to intimidate the French.[19] Seward ratcheted up the diplomatic pressure with the implication that military force was available and about to be used. Between fifty and one hundred thousand Union troops were sent to the Texas – Mexico border under the command of General Philip Sheridan. Grant had ordered them to stay there and provide what assistance they could to the forces of Juárez without actually engaging in battle.[20]

In an endeavor motivated by domestic political considerations in the fall of 1866, Seward and Johnson brought General Grant and Matias Romero, Mexico's Minister to

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[18] Matías Romero to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Feb., 17, 1864, vol. IV, pp. 52-3 in *Correspondencia de la legacion mexicana en Washington durante la intervencion extranjera, 1860-1868, 10 vols.* Mexico: Imprenta del Gobierno, 1870-1892), Library of Congress, Photoduplication Service, 1978, Shelf #70139, Reel #2.

[19] If possible, Andrew Johnson had even less experience in foreign affairs than Abraham Lincoln. Moreover, he so quickly became enmeshed in the politics of Reconstruction that he was unable to spend much time on foreign policy. Like Lincoln, he relied on Seward for this. See Eric L. McKitrick, ed., *Andrew Johnson: A Profile,* NY: Hill and Wang, 1969, especially "Johnson and His Policy" by Howard K. Beale, pp. 78-111; see also Hans Trefousse, *Andrew Johnson: A Biography,* NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1989, p. 270.

[20] The higher figure is proposed by Robert B. Brown, *Guns Over the Border: American Aid to the Juárez Government During the French Intervention,* unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Ann Arbor, U. of Michigan, 1951, p. 231. Estimates on the exact number of troops vary. Gen. Grant talked of "sixty-thousand," in Schoonover, *Mexican Lobby,* p. 59. See also P.H. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs of P.H. Sheridan, General, United States Army, 2 vols.,* NY: Charles L. Webster & Co., 1888, especially vol. II, pp. 208-228. Grant's 5/17/1865 order to Sheridan putting him in Chargé of the West, gave him command of 25,000 from Gen. Canby, 12,000 from Gen. Reynolds, the 4th Army Corps at Nashville and the 25th Army Corps at City Point, VA. Grant ordered Sheridan "to restore Texas, and that part of Louisiana held by the enemy, to the Union in the shortest practicable time, in a way most effectual for securing permanent peace." Grant's orders to Sheridan, including orders about policing the Rio Grande, are contained in *Memoirs,* pp. 208-9.

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Washington, along with them on a campaign tour that was dubbed, "The Swing Around the Circle." [21] Many speeches were made in support of republican Mexico, and the presence of Grant was a testimony to his concurrence in the policy. In a further attempt to indicate potential U.S. military involvement in solving the Mexican issue, Seward also sent two prominent generals on diplomatic missions, General John Schofield to Paris in the fall of 1865 and General William Sherman to Mexico in November and December of 1866. In both cases, the presence of U.S. generals on diplomatic missions was designed to remind Napoleon III that diplomacy was not the sole option open to the U.S.

For his strategy to work, Seward needed time, something for which he constantly bargained in the five years from the French arrival in January 1862 until their departure in March 1867. The Schofield mission to Paris in 1865 and the Sherman mission to Mexico in 1866, which will be discussed subsequently in some detail, can be seen in this context. From intelligence reports in Europe, Seward was convinced that time was on the side of the U.S. and the Juárez government. He knew that the French intervention in Mexico was putting a serious strain on the French treasury. He also knew that opposition to the intervention was growing in the French Parliament. Prussia was adopting a threatening presence on France's northeastern border, further distracting the French Emperor. Finally, reports were filtering back to Seward, particularly from Minister John Lothrop Motley, that Maximilian might not be up to the task he would assume in Mexico. These were all factors whose importance in influencing U.S. and French policy would increase with the passage of time.

Seward was also concerned about the long-term bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Mexico. He told the Mexicans like Romero, who were lobbying for the U.S. to invade and oust the French, that getting a U.S. army into Mexico would be easy. Getting

[21] Starting in Washington in late August, 1866 the official party traveled by rail to Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, West Point, Albany, Auburn (NY), Seward's hometown, Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Cleveland, Toledo, Detroit, Chicago, Springfield, IL, Alton, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Louisville, Cincinnati, Columbus, Pittsburg, Harrisburg and Baltimore, arriving in Washington on 9/15/1866. Itinerary in Gideon Welles, *Diary of Gideon Welles, vol. II,* Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1909, p. 588.

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it out again might prove considerably more difficult.[22] Seward was well educated and well traveled for his time. He had a sense of history and often took the long view. He feared that a U.S. force of liberation sent to Mexico could easily become a force of occupation and did not want to play a part in the creation of a permanently hostile state on the U.S. southern border. From his perspective, an "American Intervention" would be little better than a French one.

Indeed, Mexican hostility towards foreigners had a long provenance. One of the roots for that hostility could be found in a xenophobia based on the three-hundred and fifty years of Spanish exploitation since Fernando Cortés arrived in Tenochtitlan (Mexico City) in 1519. In 1810, Father Hidalgo's famous *Grito de Dolores (*Cry of Dolores), announcing the beginning of the struggle for Mexican independence, called for death to the "*gachupines.*"[23] Another root of hostility was the amount of Mexican territory ceded to the U.S. at the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848, even though the U.S. paid $15 million and assumed claims of American citizens worth another $3 million. That two-year struggle resulted in Mexico losing roughly half of its territory, with the U.S. increasing its size correspondingly by a third [see map ii]. Another invasion, even for ostensibly good purposes, could rekindle the ill will in Mexico that emanated from that humiliating defeat.[24] Even though the Gadsden Purchase, five years after the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, was indeed a *purchase*, the U.S. paying $10 million for roughly 20 million acres south of the Gila River, the Mexicans were annoyed by the alienation of

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[22] Matías Romero to Minister of Foreign Affairs, April 6, 1866, #266 in *Correspondencia, vol. VII,* pp. 382-85: see also Schoonover, *Mexican Lobby*, p. 122.

[23] Racial designations are often confusing for beginning students of Mexico. Europeans born in Spain but living in Mexico were called "*peninsulares*" or, derogatorily, "*gachupines.*" "*Criollos,*" creoles like Father Hidalgo, were also one hundred per cent Spanish, but born in Mexico. *Mestizos* were a mix of Spanish and Indian. This whole range of racial hierarchies, called *castas,* derived from unions between Europeans, indigenous Indians and imported slaves.

[24] See Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Dynamics of U.S.-Latin American Relations,* NY: Oxford U. Press, 1996, pp. 23-4; Lester Langley, *Mexico and the United States: The Fragile Relationship,* Boston: Twayne, 1991, pp. 4-5; Josefina Z. Vasquez and Lorenzo Meyer, *The United States and Mexico,* Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1985, chapter 3.

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yet more of their territory. The Liberals in Mexico were also infuriated that the money went to help the desperate Santa Anna regime that was persecuting them.[25]

Like Seward, Juárez and his supporters, the Juáristas, were also convinced that neither the French nor their puppet Maximilian would last very long. There were times when Juárista resources were almost depleted, and despite an early dramatic victory at Puebla in 1862, they eventually had to flee the better-organized and equipped French forces. They fought on nevertheless, using Mexico's own topography to their advantage, and their own devotion to an independent and democratic Mexico as their motivation. Although Seward's diplomacy was a critical factor in the French leaving when they did, the Juáristas themselves never doubted that the French eventually would. Matias Romero, who felt U.S. material and financial aid had been deficient, emphasized the "moral" nature of that assistance. From the Mexican perspective, the U.S. had not "saved" Mexico. Republican Mexico had saved itself with U.S. help. This difference of opinion does not necessarily reflect fundamental incompatibility. There were a number of factors that precipitated the French exodus, and Mexican, French and U.S. observers at the time tended to emphasize that which was most cordial to their own conceptions.

Despite the difference of these perspectives on the importance of the U.S. role in expelling the French from Mexico, there was no question that Seward faced enormous obstacles in managing the U.S. component of the policy that helped to bring it about. He did this while at loggerheads with many of his colleagues in the Cabinet and Congress. In particular, Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy, was among those distrustful of Seward in the Cabinet. He wrote venomously of Seward in his *Diary,* even though he occasionally accorded Seward begrudging praise.[26] Radical Republicans in Congress

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[25] Samuel F. Bemis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States, 4th ed.*, NY: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1955, pp. 324-27.

[26] Gideon Welles, *The Diary of Gideon Welles, 3 vols.*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1909. The dissertation's title comes from vol. II, p. 317.

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came to consider Seward apostate for putting union before abolition.[27] He had complicated dealings with the military, particularly with General Ulysses S. Grant. Seward also had to contend with the diplomats in Washington whose goals or methods conflicted with his own. In that regard, his relationship with Romero was particularly complex. At one point in 1865, Grant and Romero were working together behind the scenes to contradict Seward's policy directly. Another complicating factor was that, after Lincoln's assassination, Seward soon found that Andrew Johnson possessed few of the former president's exceptional qualities. He chose to remain loyal to him nevertheless, further alienating him from the Radicals in Congress, who detested Johnson. In so doing, Seward effectively terminated his own political career.

In addition to his political and diplomatic adversaries, Seward had an unwieldy State Department to contend with. He and his son Frederick labored to bring its personnel and facilities up to the level of competency necessary for a country fighting a civil war and engaging in complex diplomacy on several fronts. Seward upgraded intelligence activities, thus enabling him to form a more accurate view of European factors influencing Napoleon III's actions in Mexico. He tried to introduce an element of professionalism in the U.S. diplomatic corps at a time when ministerial positions were just another component of the spoils system. His own diplomats often caused him as much trouble as his adversaries.[28]

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[27] "Radical Republican" was a term applied to a loosely organized coalition of Republican Senators and Congressmen who were united on their overall aims for emancipation even though they never fully agreed on tactics and timing. Charles Sumner was prominent among them, along with the other Massachusetts Senator, Henry Wilson, Benjamin Wade from Ohio, Zachariah Chandler from Michigan and Lyman Trumbull of Illinois. The were joined in the House by Thaddeus Stevens and Galusha Grow of Pennsylvania, Henry Winter Davis of Maryland, George Julian and Schuyler Colfax of Indiana, John Kasson of Iowa and most of the Representatives from the New England states. Their demands ultimately found expression in the Emancipation Proclamation, the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution and in the Civil Rights Acts of 1866 and 1875. In general, they became progressively hawkish on Mexico once Maximilian was enthroned in 1864, and many advocated defending the Monroe Doctrine militarily. See Hans Trefousse, *The Radical Republicans: Lincoln's Vanguard for Racial Justice,* NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969 and T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and the Radicals,* Madison, WI, U. of Wisconsin Press, 1941.

[28] Robert L. Beisner, *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865-1900,* Arlington Heights, IL, AHM Publishing Corp., 1975, pp. 31-3.

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Although he practiced *realpolitik,* Seward was not merely a pragmatist. As a lawyer, governor, and U.S. senator, he had a firm grounding in the U.S. Constitution and its principles. He was neither a pacifist nor an isolationist. He simply preferred extending U.S. influence by economic means or legitimate purchase whenever possible.[29] He supported Juárez because the Juárez government was democratic, and because supporting Mexican democracy was the right thing to do. He also felt that the government of Juárez and his Liberals would prevail against Maximilian and the French, and the U.S. would be in a better position to influence subsequent events there as a trading partner rather than as a liberating army. That being said, Seward clearly had no interest in having a French colony, either *de facto* or *de jure*, on the southern border of the U.S.

In order to function in the Western Hemisphere, the Maximilian government needed diplomatic recognition from the U.S., which it never received. Hence, when Seward was the guest of honor at numerous official banquets in Mexico City in 1869, those toasting him made frequent mention of his devotion to democratic principles both in the U.S and Mexico, the role he had played in an administration that finally abolished slavery, and his diplomatic success over the French. Seward was receiving praise for his central role in solving problems, "embarrassments" was a term he liked to use, that he would have preferred to have avoided in the first place.

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[29] Ernest Paolino, *The Foundations of the American Empire,* Ithaca: Cornell U. Press, 1973; Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion 1860-1898,* Ithaca: Cornell U. Press, 1963; Robert Beisner, *From the Old Diplomacy to the New 1865-1900,* Arlington Heights, IL, Harlan Davidson, 1975; Joseph G. Whelan, *William Henry Seward, Expansionist,* unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, U. of Rochester, 1959.

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CHAPTER ONE

"INSURMOUNTABLE EMBARRASSMENT"

Given the secession crisis following Abraham Lincoln's election, Mexico was far from William Seward's thoughts when he was preparing to assume office as Secretary of State in March 1861. It is equally reasonable to say that Mexico was among the last things he expected to be working on at the end of his tenure in 1869. Yet attending to Mexico and the problem of the French presence there consumed much of his time as Secretary of State. Ultimately avoiding war there with the French was one of his crowning achievements as a diplomat. He would call French insistence on staying in Mexico and putting Maximilian on the throne "an insurmountable embarrassment."[1] In one sense this phrase was a threat, for it implied that continued French presence in Mexico posed an affront to the U.S. The "embarrassment," a term Seward loved, referred to the fact that the U.S. and France had a long, amicable relation that was being jeopardized by what Seward viewed as a totally misguided policy on the part of Napoleon III. His numerous "Instructions" to American diplomats on the French presence, cited throughout this chapter, especially those to William Dayton in France, make that clear.

Seward had to overcome a number of obstacles before he could effectively deal with the French presence and the prospect of an Austrian monarch replacing an indigenous Mexican president. Among those obstacles was domestic opposition to both his policies and his personality. Early on in the Lincoln Administration, Seward displayed a penchant for alienating many of his colleagues. This did not have so much to do with Seward's personality *per se*, which almost everyone conceded to be charming and amiable, but rather from the deep political passions that fired the country, and the hard feelings left over from the Republican Party's nominating convention, where

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[1] Seward to Dayton, April 27, 1863, #338, Diplomatic Records, France, Instructions, France, M77, R56, p. 368.

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Seward had almost inexplicably lost to Lincoln.[2]

Seward's diplomacy was shaped in part by Mexican initiatives, especially an unexpectedly strong initial military resistance at Puebla in 1862. This resistance caused Napoleon III's scheme to lose valuable momentum while the U.S. was distracted by the Civil War. Seward had to come to grips with the fact that France was, if not outright devious in its diplomatic correspondence concerning its intentions in Mexico, then something far less than straightforward. This became clear when a letter from Napoleon III to his commander in Mexico, General Forey, outlining the rationale for the French initiative, was published in January 1863. Part of the "embarrassment" was catching an old ally involved in such duplicity.

The main point, however, is that the "insurmountable embarrassment" was indeed surmountable, had Napoleon III been more perceptive. He had indications from the beginning that his scheme for Mexico would not work, and perhaps through pride or *hubris*, simply chose to ignore them. In 1871 when both were out of office, Seward confided to former French Foreign Minister Drouyn de Lhuys that he could not understand how Napoleon III, who had visited the United States, could have so completely misperceived his chances of success. When asked his opinion of Napoleon III, two years after the matter of the French Intervention had been resolved, Seward replied:

> I do not allow myself, if I can avoid it, to judge statesmen any more than generals on the mere ground of their success. I was astonished when I saw the Emperor afterwards balancing so closely between the United States Government and the Rebellion [Confederacy], and finally throwing his sword into the scale by his expedition to Mexico. I had seen him when he was in exile in the United States; he talked with me at Compiegne [royal residence outside of Paris] about his visit

[2] Seward was 71 ½ votes ahead of Lincoln on the first ballot, 3 ½ on the second, losing on the third. Glyndon Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward*, NY: Oxford U. Press, 1967, pp. 224-5.

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> there. I could not believe it possible that a European statesman who had visited the United States would fail to see that the combination of the States was impregnable, and that the American continent should never again be the theatre of European aggression or invasion.[3]

Seward, on his account, correctly perceived the principal political facts from the outset, couched them in their historical context, and did not deviate from a strategy that ultimately left the U.S. "unembarrassed."

Seward had mentioned Mexico in a few speeches in the U.S. Senate, but in the late 1850s, Mexico was not Seward's primary concern.[4] By then, Mexico had been in turmoil for half a century. It had taken over a decade of brutal fighting to achieve independence after Father Hidalgo's call to arms in 1810. The new Mexican leader, Augustín Iturbide, had himself declared Emperor Augustín I in May 1822. By February 1823, Antonio López de Santa Anna ousted Augustín I, but then proceeded to adopt some of the emperor's megalomaniacal and opportunistic characteristics. He became the dominant figure in Mexican politics until he was replaced in the mid-1850s. There were a number of reasons leading to Santa Anna's ouster, not the least of which was his mishandling of the Mexican-American War, 1846-1848. The cession of territory to the U.S. in the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo resulted from that conflict. Needing cash, Santa Anna agreed to alienate more land via the Gadsden Purchase in 1853.[5]

After the demise of Santa Anna, a group of progressive reformers including Benito Juárez, the Liberals, took over the government. The Conservatives, who had been

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[3] Interview between Seward and Drouyn de Lhuys, August, 1871, reported in Frederic Seward, *Reminiscences of a War-Time Statesman and Diplomat, 1830-1915*, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1916, p. 424; Van Deusen, *Seward*, p. 560.

[4] J. Fred Rippy, *The United States and Mexico*, NY: F.S. Crofts & Co., 1931, ch. 15. Rippy cites speeches in 1846, 1850, 1852 and a general speech about the whole Western Hemisphere in 1860, p. 252.

[5] The territory gained in the Treaty ultimately led to the states of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona and parts of Colorado and New Mexico. The Gadsden Purchase in 1853 added territory in modern southern Arizona and New Mexico, suitable for extending a railroad line to the West Coast, see Samuel Flagg Bemis, *Diplomatic History of the United States, 4th ed.*, NY: Holt Rhinehart and Winston, 1955, pp. 325-27.

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turned out of office, and the Catholic Church, which was losing property and power under the Liberals, fought back. The country tottered on the brink of bankruptcy, but that had been the situation for years.

Santa Anna, while still in power, had sent Juárez into exile, largely as a personal vendetta. This stemmed from an incident after the Mexican-American War (1846-48) when Santa Anna was in disgrace, and running from his enemies. He was denied refuge in the Mexican State of Oaxaca by then governor Juárez. When Santa Anna returned to power in the early 1850s, he remembered Juárez's refusal and had him imprisoned in May 1853. Juárez was incarcerated in the infamous harbor prison of Veracruz, San Juan de Ulua, then put on a ship destined for Europe via Havana. In a twist of fate that had great consequences for both the U.S. and Mexico, Juárez managed to reship for New Orleans upon his arrival in Havana.[6] A group of Mexican dissidents, called Liberals, had already assembled in New Orleans, and it was there that the seeds were sown for the project to overthrow Santa Anna, later called the *Plan de Ayutla*. Their platform called for social justice, and an end to military and Catholic Church privilege. Profoundly influenced by the Enlightenment and the American and French revolutions, these reformers advocated a republic and the rule of law.[7] They were opposed, of course, by staunch Catholics and the military, neither of which wanted to change the *status quo*. The subsequent success of the Liberals in the 1860s is remarkable in light of their pathetic start in exile. Historian Ivie Cadenhead described the conditions they faced in New Orleans as follows:

> It is difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct the feelings of frustration, homesickness, true illness, improvidence, and despair that this group of exiles

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[6] Ivie E. Cadenhead, *Benito Juárez,* New York: Twayne Publishers, 1973, pp 40-43. In New Orleans, Juárez encountered other Mexican revolutionaries who would play major roles in the upcoming War of Reform and in Juárez's Liberal government, Melchor Ocampo, Jose Maria Mata and Ponciano Arriaga. Juan Alvarez was a rebel fighter from Guerrero province, whose assistants, Ignacio Comonfort and Florencio Villareal published the *Plan* based on the New Orleans group's ideas.

[7] Jaime Suchlicki, *Mexico: From Montezuma to the Fall of the PRI,* Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2001, p. 81.

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felt. They spent their time searching for good news from home, corresponding with friends in Mexico and the United States, seeking allies for the ultimate victory over Santa Anna and, all the while, trying to survive with what little funds were obtained from home and earned in the menial odd jobs available to a Mexican in New Orleans.[8]

Within a year and a half of Juárez's exile to New Orleans, Santa Anna had resigned. General Juan Alvarez, a good soldier but poor political administrator, headed the new regime, but his War Minister Ignacio Comonfort handled personnel decisions. He recalled Juárez, who was given the post of Minister of Justice and Public Instruction. His fellow New Orleans exile, Melchor Ocampo, became Minister of both the Interior and Foreign Affairs.

The overall political chaos existing in Mexico in the 1850s could be attributed to several causes. Mexico's crushing defeat in the Mexican-American War (1846-1848) at the hands of the "*gringos*" and the alienation of half of its territory in the subsequent peace treaty had devastated public confidence in Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. Historian Michael Meyer questions Santa Anna's role as a megalomaniac and asks if "Santa Anna was the cause of Mexico's problems or if Mexico was the cause of Santa Anna's problems," in light of Santa Anna having been president eleven times from 1823 to 1855, Meyer opts for the former.[9] The Liberal Party was born in opposition to Santa Anna's excesses and Catholic Church's perceived complicity in them.[10]

Insofar as Mexico had no tradition of a "loyal opposition" and no mechanism for the peaceful transition of power, a vacuum was created when Santa Anna was forced out in 1855, a vacuum that took until 1867 to fill. A Constitutional Convention, dominated

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[8] Cadenhead, *Benito Juárez,* pp. 40-1. Juárez himself got a job rolling cigars.
[9] Michael C. Meyer, *The Course of Mexican History, 6th ed.*, NY: Oxford U. Press, 1999, 318.
[10] The Liberals succeeded in what is called the Revolution of Ayutla (1855), named after their pronouncement, the *Plan de Ayutla,* and, of course, the Mexican city of the same name, as reform proposals, *plans*, were often named after the cities where they originated. Once successful, Juan Alvarez became President, Ignacio Comonfort, Secretary of War, Melchor Ocampo, Secretary of the Treasury, Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, Secretary of Development and Benito Juárez, Secretary of Justice. Ibid., p. 362.

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by Liberals, was called to formulate the Constitution of 1857, which included a bill of rights, the abolition of slavery, the guarantee of the right to bear arms, and *habeas corpus*. Three very important provisions bore the names of their proponents: *ley* (law) *Juárez, ley Lerdo,* and *ley Iglesias.*[11] *Ley Juárez* abolished special military and religious courts. The Liberals insisted that priests and soldiers face prosecution in regular courts just like other Mexicans and not have their own legal systems (*fueros*). *Ley Lerdo* limited the Catholic Church to owning only property used in its daily operations, with the government confiscating the rest and selling it, with a view to financing the Liberal political agenda. Finally, *Ley Iglesias* transferred the power of registering births, deaths, adoptions and marriages from the Catholic Church to civil authorities and prohibited the Church from charging fees for these services.[12]

These three laws caused immediate tension not only between the Liberals and the Conservatives who supported Catholic Church and military privilege, but also amongst the Liberals themselves. Although agreeing on most issues, Liberals disagreed on the role of the Catholic Church, particularly after the Vatican weighed into the deliberations, threatening excommunication for those supporting the Constitution containing the above provisions.[13] President Alvarez and several Liberal cabinet members abdicated, leaving a vacillating Ignacio Comonfort in charge as president.[14] What ultimately precipitated the ensuing war was the fact that the Constitution agreed upon in 1857 did not establish the Catholic Church as Mexico's official religion.

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[11] Another confusing factor for one researching this period of Mexican history is that there are two Lerdo de Tejada, Miguel (1812 - 1861) and Sebastián (1823-1889). Miguel was an early supporter of Juárez and served as his Minister of Finance. He died unexpectedly of typhus. Sebastián was less involved with Juárez early on, but became his principal adviser when the republican government was in flight in his capacity as Minister of Government and Foreign Relations. Romero's correspondence from Washington was directed to Sebastián. Frank A. Knapp, *The Life of Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada 1823-1889: A Study of Influence and Obscurity,* Austin: U. Texas Press, 1951, chapters V & VII.

[12] Michael C. Meyer et. al, *The Course of Mexican History, 6th ed.*, New York: Oxford U. Press, 1999, pp. 363-4. *Ley* means "law" in Spanish. See also Jaime Suchlicki, *Mexico:From Montezuma to NAFTA, Chiapas and Beyond,* Washington: Brassey's, 2001, chapter 10.

[13] Meyer, *Course,* p. 366.

[14] Ibid., p. 363. Comonfort had been Alvarez's Minister of War.

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Juárez, Mexican Chief Justice since 1855, was not himself elected, having become president under a provision of the 1857 Constitution that effectively made the Chief Justice vice-president. As the fight over the new anti-clerical laws heated up, Comonfort, a compromiser at heart, resigned. Seeing no solution to the Liberal/Conservative standoff, he left office just before Conservative General Felix Zuloaga staged a *coup d'état,* dissolved the Liberal Congress, and arrested Juárez.

In one of a series of interesting escapes during this period of Mexican history, Juárez managed to escape from the Conservatives and flee to Queretaro, north of Mexico City. Given Comonfort's resignation, the Liberals who had fled to Queretaro proclaimed Juárez President of the Republic according to the constitutional provisions cited above. The Conservatives, of course, totally disregarded this proclamation. The armed struggle between the Liberals and Conservatives, called the War of the Reform (1858-1861), was on.[15]

The Liberals left Queretaro and established themselves on the Gulf Coast in Veracruz. From there, the Juáristas conducted a brutal fight, made more bitter by its religious context.[16] Like Lincoln with Grant, Juárez ultimately found two good field generals, Gonzalez Ortega and Ignacio Zaragoza, who could lead the Liberals to victory. The final battle took place at San Miguel Calpulalpan in December of 1860, where Ortega's Liberal forces decisively defeated the Conservatives led by Miramón. Victorious President Juárez returned to Mexico City for the first time in almost three years in early January 1861. The Liberals' sense of euphoria was soon dissipated by the realization that practically no *pesos* remained in the national treasury. Juárez would have to temporarily suspend payments on Mexico's foreign debt in order to keep his

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[15] "The War of the Reform . . . was in many ways the culmination of the ideological disputations, the shuffling of constitutions, the church-state controversies, and the minor civil wars that had shattered the peace periodically since Independence. Mexicans had not yet defined the kind of society they wanted to the satisfaction of one another, and the intense passions of the age precluded the possibility of a rapprochement without still another resort to arms." Meyer, *Course,* p. 367.

[16] A good example of the ferocity of the conflict is that after one battle, Conservative General Marquez ordered shot the medical personnel who had treated some Liberal combatants.

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government afloat, an act that would precipitate a joint European debt collecting mission later in that year.

This, then, was the political situation in Mexico just prior to the Lincoln Administration taking office. As was the custom, Lincoln had stayed in Illinois between Election Day and the inauguration, while Seward, Secretary of State designate but still a U.S. Senator from New York, was in Washington trying to articulate the goals and give direction to the new administration. Whatever was happening in Mexico was much less pressing than the secession of southern states that had already begun.[17] The tension was so high that Lincoln had to essentially be smuggled into Washington for the inauguration.[18]

Sensing a drift in Lincoln's administration shortly after the inauguration, Seward wrote an ill-considered note to the President in which he brought up the perceived lack of executive leadership and proposed a number of initiatives that would put Seward, not the President, squarely at the center of decision-making [see Appendix I].[19] This memo is frequently cited by scholars partial to Lincoln as an example of Seward's arrogance and lack of respect for the President.[20] Those interested in the evolution of Lincoln-Seward foreign policy cite, occasionally in disbelief, Seward's proposal that the U.S. initiate hostilities with a European power in order to redirect domestic anger toward a foreign foe, as an example of how misguided the Secretary of State could be:

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[17] S. Carolina Dec. 20, 1860, Mississippi, Jan. 9, 1861, Florida, Jan. 10, Alabama, Jan.11, Georgia, Jan. 19, Louisiana, Jan. 26., and Texas, Feb. 1, in James M. McPherson, *The Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era,* NY: Oxford U. Press, 1988, p. 235.

[18] Ibid., p. 261-2.

[19] Sometimes referred to the "April Fools" memo for the day in 1861 when it was given to the President: "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration" cited in Taylor, *Seward,* pp. 150-51: Van Deusen, *Seward,* pp. 282-84. It was not made public until the publication of the Hay & Nicolay biography of Lincoln in 1890.

[20] Jay Monaghan, , *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Affairs,* pp. 54-56; Mahin, *One War at a Time,* p. 7.

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> I would demand explanations from Spain and France categorically at once. I would demand explanations from Britain . . . and send agents into Canada and Mexico and Central America to raise a vigorous continental spirit of independence on this continent against European intervention. And if satisfactory explanations are not received from Spain and France, we would convene Congress and declare war against them.[21]

In fact, Spain was fomenting trouble in Santo Domingo and France was trying to re-occupy Haiti, neither a *casus belli*. Great Britain and Russia had likewise done nothing that would warrant a declaration of war. Although this dissertation will argue that Seward did his best to avoid war in Mexico in 1865 – 1867, it is ironic that the Secretary's first advice to the new president was to advocate potential war on several fronts to take the country's mind off of its domestic troubles.

Seward developed both skill and subtlety as he grew in his capacity as Secretary of State. This early memorandum to President Lincoln is an example of neither. In his defense, it can be argued that this was an internal memorandum designed to address the lack of political direction he perceived and to jolt the President into "energetic prosecution" of whatever policies were adopted. If the President did not want to take the lead in implementing such aggressive policies, Seward wrote that he "would seek neither to evade nor assume responsibility." In his characteristically wry way, Lincoln began showing his mettle to his subordinate Seward by replying [see Appendix II]:

> I remark that if this must be done, I must do it. When a general line of policy is adopted, I apprehend there is no danger of its being changed without good reason or continuing to be a subject of unnecessary debate; still, upon points arising in its progress, I wish, and I suppose I am entitled to have, the advice of all of the Cabinet.[22]

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[21] John G. Nicolay & John Hay , *Abraham Lincoln, a History, 10 vols.*, NY: The Century Co. 1890, III, pp. 445-447.
[22] Ibid., pp. 448-9.

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His high-handed approach got Seward into trouble with his colleagues early on, although, according to Hay and Nicolay, knowledge of this particular episode between the President and the Secretary of State, never extended beyond the two of them at the time.[23] There were, of course, other strong personalities in the Lincoln cabinet, and Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles was among them. He took a particular dislike to Seward and accused him of meddling in Navy Department affairs in a number of instances:

> It was a misfortune of Mr. Seward, and one of his characteristics, that he delighted in oblique and indirect movements; he also prided himself in his skill and management, had a craving desire that the world should consider him the great and controlling mind of his party, of the Administration, and of the country. He was intensely anxious to control and direct the War and Navy movements, although he had neither the knowledge nor aptitude that was essential for either.[24]

Some cabinet members thought that Seward had arranged cabinet meetings in such a way as to preserve his pre-eminence. He was generally regarded as trying to perform the function of Prime Minister, not just the role of the most important cabinet member.[25] Despite the April Fool's Memorandum, Seward and Lincoln quickly ironed out their differences and settled into a good working relationship. Lincoln recognized Seward's intelligence and foreign experience, and Seward soon developed an admiration for Lincoln's wisdom. Just a month later, in May 1861, Seward wrote to his wife about Lincoln, "The President is the best of us."[26] According to Seward biographer Glyndon Van Deusen, Lincoln gradually found Seward indispensable for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was Seward's advice about protocol matters about which Lincoln

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[23] Ibid., p. 449.
[24] Gideon Welles, *Diary of Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy Under Lincoln and Johnson, vol. I 1861-March 30, 1864,* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1911, p.39.
[25] In his August 1871 meeting with Drouyn de Lhuys, after both had left office, Seward indicated that he saw himself as Prime Minister. See Chapter 5, n. 36, p. 183.
[26] W.H. Seward to Frances Seward, May, 1861, quoted in Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward,* p. 272.

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admittedly knew little. Within the first year of his administration, Lincoln developed the habit of leaving the White House and visiting Seward at home.[27]

Such a warm working relationship did not develop between Seward and his former abolitionist colleague, Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Sumner biographer David Donald writes that Lincoln considered Sumner "the one possible counterweight to Seward," and consulted with him extensively in the spring and summer of 1861.[28] Sumner disagreed with Seward on a number of important issues, notably appointments and the naval blockade of southern ports. His disagreement did not take the form of direct encounters. Sumner instead visited several of Seward's interlocutors in Washington, or wrote letters to his friends in Europe showing disdain for the Secretary of State. Donald maintains that Sumner had a "mole" in the State Department in the person of Count Adam Gurowski, who owed his job as a translator to Sumner. By late spring 1861, Sumner had concluded that Seward was "not frank and straightforward; only a cunning contriver of little plots; and not a true man."[29]

In late 1862, Sumner authored a motion in the Senate whereby a nine-member committee would meet with Lincoln and call for Seward's ouster. The Union's devastating defeats at Fredericksburg, Virginia in December 1862 exacerbated that tension. The Union disillusionment occasioned by those defeats may well have been the decisive factor pushing a group of Radical Republicans to call for Seward's resignation, effectively using him as a convenient scapegoat. The allegations against Seward ranged from the petty to the serious, from Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles's complaints about meddling to accusations that Seward sent out diplomatic instructions without

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[27] Ibid., Ch. 23, especially pp. 338-9

[28] David Donald, *Charles Sumner and the Rights of Man,* NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970, pp. 18-24. Among Sumner's American correspondents were his best friend Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Seward's successor as Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish; in Britain he corresponded with the Duke of Argyll, John Bright, Richard Cobden and W.E. Gladstone.

[29] Ibid., p. 20.

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consulting the President. Sumner, who always thought that *he* would make a good Secretary of State, took particular offense at a confidential message Seward sent to Charles Francis Adams in 1861, when Seward had written that:

> It seems as if extreme advocates of African slavery and its most vehement opponents were acting in concert together to precipitate a servile war – the former by making the most desperate attempts to overthrow the federal union, the latter by demanding an edict of universal emancipation as a lawful and necessary, if not, as they say, the only legitimate way of saving the Union. [30]

This sentence essentially put abolitionists like Sumner on a par with slave owners as obstacles to the successful prosecution of the war. When this was published in the annual sample of State Department correspondence, once again Sumner was both furious and aghast. Indeed, the message seems incongruous in that Seward wrote it at all to Charles Francis Adams, a U.S. official from Massachusetts with abolitionist leanings. The second mistake was allowing it to be published in a compendium of State Department correspondence in which other things had been edited out. Referring to this correspondence, Welles described the confrontation in the White House on December 19, 1862 as follows:

> During the discussion [between Lincoln, the Senate committee and all of the Cabinet members except Seward] the volume of diplomatic correspondence, recently published, was alluded to; some letters denounced as unwise and impolitic were specified, one which, a confidential dispatch to Mr. Adams, was read. If it was unwise to write, it was certainly injudicious and indiscreet to publish such a document. Mr. Seward has genius and talent, -- no one better knows it than himself, --but for one in his place he is often wanting in careful discrimination, true wisdom, sound judgment, and discreet statesmanship. The

[30] Seward to Adams, Confidential, May 21, 1861, #10, Diplomatic Records, Instructions, Great Britain, M77, R 76, pp. 406-13.

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> committee believe [sic] he thinks more of the glorification of Seward than the welfare of the country. He wishes the glorification of both, and believes he is the man to accomplish it, but has unwittingly and unwarily brought upon himself a vast amount of distrust and hostility on the part of the Senators, by his endeavors to impress them and others with the belief that he is the Administration. It is a mistake; the Senators dislike it, -- have measured and know him.[31]

Under Sumner's guidance, a Radical caucus voted to send a delegation to the President to discuss with him the resolution they had adopted, "that a committee be appointed to wait upon the President . . . and urge upon him changes in conduct and in the Cabinet which shall give the administration unity and vigor."[32] Sen. Morton Wilkinson accused Seward of "controlling" the President and "thwarting" other members of the cabinet. William Pitt Fessenden of Maine said that Seward exerted a "malign influence" and was joined in his condemnations by Senators Lyman Trumbull, James Wilson Grimes, Ira Harris and Samuel Clarke Pomeroy. An old family friend and colleague, Senator Preston King of New York, chose not to vote and went instead to notify Seward at home about what was transpiring. Showing his loyalty to Lincoln, Seward reportedly said "They may do as they please about me but they shall not put the President in a false position on my account."[33] He immediately wrote out his resignation, instructed his son Frederick to do the same, and had Frederick and Senator King deliver the resignations to the White House.

He made this move in order to pre-empt his senatorial critics and relieve the President of the necessity of defending him or of making any concessions in order to retain him. It was a bold stroke and proved central to the eventual resolution of the matter. It did, however, reveal to Seward just how far he had alienated the Republican Party, for, of the thirty-two Republican senators, only Preston King had not supported the

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[31] Gideon Welles, *Diary of Gideon Welles*, vol. I, p. 198.
[32] Hendrick, *Lincoln's War Cabinet*, p. 331-47; David Donald, *Charles Sumner*, p. 92.
[33] Hendrick, *Cabinet*, p. 333.

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resolution condemning him. If he had had any doubts before, he now knew that any hopes he harbored of ever becoming President were seriously compromised.

The Senators' primary source for anti-Seward sentiment in the Cabinet was Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase, a former senator from Ohio long allied to the Radical cause. When publicly confronted about the whole issue by the President, Chase disavowed his complaints and felt compelled to submit his own resignation. Lincoln, showing characteristic political deftness in handling the situation, declined all the resignations and, by the following Monday, had decided that the Sewards and Chase would continue in their positions. Welles speculated on Lincoln's thinking as follows:

> It was announced yesterday morning [12/22/1862] that the President had requested Mr. Seward and Mr. Chase to withdraw their resignations and resume their duties . . . Seward's influence has often been anything but salutary. Not that he was evil inclined, but he is meddlesome, fussy, has no fixed policy. Chase chafed under Seward's management, yet has tried to conceal any exhibition of irritated feelings. Seward, assuming to be helmsman, has, while affecting and believing in his own superiority, tried to be patronizing to all . . . The President feels that he is under obligation to each and that both are serviceable. He is friendly to both. He is fond of Seward, who is affable; he respects Chase, who is clumsy. Seward comforts him; Chase he deems a necessity.[34]

This was not a tempest in a teapot. During the second two weeks in December the Union had lost thirteen thousand soldiers at Frederickburg to the Confederacy's five thousand. Radical Republican Senators brazenly challenged presidential authority, and the cabinet verged on disintegration. Morale could not have been lower and yet the war would have to be pursued with even greater vigor. Radicals felt doublecrossed by Chase, who failed to confirm his accusations against Seward when directly confronted by the president. One of the reasons for this was, of course, that Seward had not really done

[34] Ibid., p. 205.

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anything wrong. He supported the president, and was working, as best he could, to conceive and implement a foreign policy that would win the war. As anyone in such a prominent position, forced to make many rapid decisions, Seward had made some bureaucratic errors, but nothing even close to the excesses of Simon Cameron in the War Department. Seward's accusers nonetheless persisted in their view that Congress, particularly the Senate, should have greater control over the Executive in the prosecution of the war and its attendant diplomacy.

According to Welles, Seward had been sorely shaken by the confrontation. When Welles met with him to discuss what had transpired at the meeting where his resignation was discussed, he reported that Seward "tries to suppress any exhibition of personal grievance or disappointment, but is painfully wounded, mortified, and chagrined."[35] Henceforth Seward would have to conduct his public affairs trusting essentially no one but his son, the President, and a few old friends like Bigelow and Sanford in Europe.

The more salient point here appears to be that all this internal tumult was taking place in late 1862, when Union fortunes looked very bleak indeed. In the spring, Stonewall Jackson had battered Union forces in the Shenandoah and Lee had forced McClellan to abandon the Peninsular Campaign. Lee had crushed Pope at the Second Bull Run in August. At the Battle of Antietam Creek in September both sides suffered heavy losses. It was hardly the time for cabinet infighting exacerbated by congressional meddling.

Sensing opportunity in this disarray, Europeans sought to take advantage of America's troubles. British shipbuilders were busily providing craft for the Confederacy and British and French smugglers were moving cotton out of the Confederacy from the Mexican cities along the Rio Grande. British-U.S. bilateral relations had already been strained by the *Trent* affair a year earlier. In November 1861, two Confederate diplomats heading for their assignments in Europe, James Mason and John Slidell, were forcibly

[35] Ibid., p 201

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removed from the British vessel *Trent.* Great Britain maintained that this action violated international law and strongly protested to Washington. On the other hand, the U.S. naval officer who had taken Mason and Slidell, Charles Wilkes, was viewed as a hero in the U.S. Tempers flared on both sides of the Atlantic and there was talk of war between the Union and Great Britain. This came at a particularly inopportune time for Seward, who was trying to keep Great Britain and France from according diplomatic recognition to the Confederacy. Despite public opinion, Seward finally gave in to the British and released the two Confederate diplomats, citing a legal technicality in the way the *Trent* was taken as his reason.[36]

Seward was simultaneously trying to keep France from formally recognizing the Confederacy, but France kept looking for ways to insert itself into the U.S. Civil War. Napoleon III offered his good offices as a mediator early in May, 1861. In order to evaluate the French emperor's motives, Seward sent his trusted friend Henry Sanford to Paris to meet with French Foreign Minister Edouard-Antoine Thouvenel.[37] Although designated as Minister-Resident to Belgium, Sanford was in Paris until the newly-appointed U.S. Minister William L. Dayton could arrive. France and Britain had recognized the "belligerent" status of the Confederacy, something that greatly annoyed Seward. Thouvenel told Sanford that the decision had been taken for economic, not political reasons. Thouvenel then added, "the emperor personally is deeply grieved at this war and its possible results . . .and he has told me that he would willingly offer his services in mediation if he thought they could be useful toward securing a peaceful

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[36] Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward,* pp. 306-17, Norbert Ferris, *Desperate Diplomacy: William H. Seward's Foreign Policy, 1861,* Knoxville: U. of Tennessee Press, 1976, pp. 194-97; Ernest Paolino, *The Foundations of American Empire: William Henry Seward and U.S. Foreign Policy,* Ithaca: Cornell U. Press, 1973, pp. 14-15.

[37] Henry S. Sanford had served at a number of U.S. legations in Europe and spoke several European languages. He became the disbursing agent for Seward's informal intelligence network in Europe. Seward allowed him to travel extensively away from his post in Brussels to attend to various clandestine affairs. See Joseph A. Fry, *Henry S. Sanford: Diplomacy and Business in Nineteenth Century America,* Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1982, Ch. 3, especially pp. 38, 41-45, 50-1.

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termination of this unhappy difficulty."[38] Seward turned down that offer abruptly, seeing no reason for any European to become involved in what he viewed as a purely internal matter.

In the meantime, U.S. efforts to help Mexico financially were coming to naught. The McLane-Ocampo Treaty had been negotiated at the end of the Buchanan Administration to forestall Mexico's creditors, but was voted down by both Mexico and the U.S.[39] After taking office, Seward initially continued the approach taken by the Buchanan Administration to ease Mexico's debt problems.[40] The U.S. was willing to help Mexico with the interest payments on its roughly $62,000,000 of "public" debt. The problem here was that with so many changes of government, it was not crystal clear which Mexican government was responsible for contracting and discharging such debt. The Conservative Miramón government that had preceded the Liberal one of Juárez had issued Mexican government bonds through the Franco-Swiss banking house of Jecker with a face value of some $15,000,000. The Miramón government only received approximately $7,500,00 from the transaction, which is why Juárez's government chose in January 1861 to suspend payments until questions of fraud were answered. This was consistent with a proclamation that Juárez had issued when he was still fighting the Conservatives in 1859, that bonds issued by the Conservatives would not be redeemed by his government. Napoleon III's half-brother, the Duc de Morny, was a large holder of those bonds, and some historians have speculated that it was his financial stake in recouping his losses that led him to influence Napoleon III to try to forcibly collect the debt starting in 1862. The Duc reportedly had considerable influence with his half-

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[38] Quoted in Lynn Case & Warren Spencer, *The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy*, Philadelphia: U. Pennsylvania Press, 1970, p. 31. At this juncture, Sanford saw Napoleon III as essentially pro-Union. That would change shortly after French troops arrived in Mexico

[39] See note #9 in this dissertation's Introduction; see also Samuel Flagg Bemis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States, 4th ed.*, NY: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1955, pp.388-95.

[40] Mexico had two kinds of debt: claims by private citizens of the U.S., France, Spain, and Great Britain largely because of the depredations of warfare; and debt officially contracted by the Mexican government. For Juárez, the most pressing of these were loans contracted with the banking house of Jecker. See Hanna & Hanna, *Napoleon III*, p. 36; Cunningham, *Mexico*, pp. 81-2.

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brother, and he along with many close to Napoleon III stood to make considerable sums if the bonds were honored.[41]

The mechanism for collecting the debt was to be a tripartite force composed of British, French and Spanish soldiers and sailors. This force had been authorized by the "Convention of London," (referred to as the "Tripartite Agreement" in some texts, see Appendix III). The three powers thereby agreed to a joint military debt-collecting mission, to begin at the end of 1861, to settle individual and governmental claims against Mexico. The key element of the Convention, as far as this dissertation is concerned, was its provision that there would be no involvement in Mexico's internal political affairs. The foreigners were in Mexico to mediate claims and collect funds for payment of those claims from coastal customs houses, primarily that in Veracruz.

At the eleventh hour, Seward sought to keep the Europeans from initiating this armed incursion into Mexico by offering a loan package that would pay interest on the public part of the debt. In a plan worked out with U.S. Minister to Mexico Thomas Corwin, Seward offered to buy Baja (lower) California from Mexico outright.[42] This plan would have provided immediate cash to Mexico to placate France, Britain and Spain. It also promised the additional benefit of keeping the Confederacy from bidding for Baja California for its own purposes. This idea went nowhere. No matter what happened, Juárez would remain intransigent when it came to alienating any more Mexican territory. The territorial cessions to the U.S. in the Treaty of Guadalupe-

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[41] Hanna & Hanna, *Napoleon III and Mexico*, pp. 35-7; Michele Cunningham, *Mexico and the Foreign Policy of Napoleon III*, argues that reclaiming the bonds was not the chief factor in the European debt-collecting mission, p. 81-2. See also Percy F. Martin, *Maximilian in Mexico: The Story of the French Intervention (1861 – 1867)*, London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1913, pp. 46-49 who maintains that profit from these loans was a motive in the French Intervention.

[42] Thomas Corwin (1794-1865) Whig Governor of Ohio 1840, U.S. Senator from Ohio 1844-1850), Republican U.S. Congressman 1858, U.S. Minister to Mexico 1861. Corwin was most famous for an 1847 speech in the Senate opposing President Polk and the Mexican-American War. Basic biographical information taken from the web version of James G. Wilson and John Fiske, *Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography,6 vols.*, NY: D. Appleton and Co., 1887-1889, supposedly the "most quoted" biographical source for 19th and early 20th century America: http://www.virtualology.com/nelsonappletonmiles/

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Hidalgo had been a major factor in Santa Anna losing his political leadership of Mexico, and Juárez was not going to repeat that mistake.

It cannot be denied that Seward's first efforts to aid Mexico appeared less than altruistic. He was not responsible for the provisions of McLane-Ocampo, but he did bear much of the responsibility for the negotiations carried on by Corwin. Offering to buy Baja was consistent with the Pierce Administration's Gadsden Purchase, but it still retained the formula of land for money. The direct loan from the U.S. to Mexico that would have enabled that country to fend off its creditors for five or six years also required access to mineral rights in northern Mexico as collateral. Given independent Mexico's troubles repaying its debts through the first fifty years of its existence, there was reason to believe that default after five years was essentially a foregone conclusion, had the loan been approved.

Unfortunately, Mexico's critical need for money coincided with the beginning of the Civil War and the vastly increased U.S. expenditures necessary to conduct it. The loan proposal encountered serious problems in the U.S. Senate, which demanded mineral rights as collateral. For their part, the Mexicans were loath to pledge public lands and mineral rights for a loan that had a good chance of ending in default, even though land was the only collateral they had. The Europeans also dismissed the proposed deal, maintaining that the U.S. loan would cover only the $62 million of Mexico's public ("funded") debt, and would provide no compensation at all for the numerous outstanding individual claims. The various loan proposals were defeated, bringing Seward's first attempts to help the Juárez regime to naught. These defeats also showed Seward that Congress, particularly the Senate, would make it exceptionally hard to pass formal treaties with Mexico, or treaties with other countries about Mexico.

Admittedly, the loans to Mexico would have been the first officially authorized to another government by the U.S., and thus represented uncharted waters for many members of Congress. Secondly, Civil War passions erupted around any initiative

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concerning land where slavery might be extended, or the building of railroads or other public works that might make the extension of slavery easier. In the following chapter, it will be shown how Mexican Minister to the United States Matias Romero essentially came to the same conclusion. If Mexico was to get any material aid from the U.S., it was probably not going to come through official channels. The self-serving nature of the Baja purchase proposal and the land/mineral rights provisions of the Corwin loan proposals have led certain Mexican historians to question whether or not Seward was trying to serve Mexico's interests or those of the U.S.[43] It is not disingenuous to say that he was trying to serve both. He soon realized that without Congressional backing, he would be able to serve neither.

Meanwhile, while the Corwin loan proposals were bogged down in the U.S. Senate, the first contingent of Convention of London troops, a group of Spanish soldiers, arrived off Veracruz in December 1861, followed by the French in January 1862 and the English shortly thereafter.[44] However, within two months of their arrival, it became clear to Spanish General Juan Prim and English commissioner Sir Charles Wyke that the French were using the debt-collecting mission as a pretext for occupation. Although all forces were supposed to stay in Veracruz either on ships or at the customs house, the prevalence of malaria resulted in requests to the Mexican authorities that the forces move inland. This step was crucial to Napoleon III getting his troops permanently established with a protected supply line to the main port of Veracruz. Once established inland, the French proposed repayment terms that the Juárez government refused to accept, and the Spanish and English departed, angry about being involved in French subterfuge.[45]

By March 1862, Secretary Seward felt it necessary to delineate to U.S. diplomats the Lincoln Administration's policy toward the debt-collecting mission and presence of

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[43] Josefina Z. Vasquez and Lorenzo Meyer, *The United States and Mexico*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985, pp. 64-67.
[44] Dabbs, *The French Army in Mexico 1861 – 1867*, pp. 18-20.
[45] Hannah & Hannah, *Napoleon III*, pp. 42-45; Martin, *Maximilian in Mexico*, pp. 88-90.

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European troops in Mexico. He also addressed the rumor that a foreign prince would be installed there:

> The President . . .deems it his duty to express to the allies [Britain, France and Spain] the opinion that no monarchical government which could be founded in Mexico, in the presence of foreign navies and armies, in the waters and upon the soil of Mexico, would have any prospect of security or permanence . . . Secondly, that the instability of such a monarchy there would be enhanced if the throne should be assigned to any person not of Mexican nationality. That, under such circumstances, the new government must speedily fall unless it could draw into its support European alliances, which . . .would in fact make it the beginning of a permanent policy of armed European monarchical intervention, injurious and practically hostile to the most general system of government in the continent of America and this would be the beginning rather than the ending of revolution in Mexico.[46]

This message was a good representation of the first step of Seward's two-step approach to the French in Mexico. It was polite and did not specifically blame the French, but was addressed to the "allies." Secondly, it showed sensitivity to Mexican concerns, noting that according the throne to someone who "was not of Mexican nationality" would lead any such government to "speedily fail." Seward continued:

> In such a case, it is not to be doubted that the permanent interests and sympathies of this country would be with the other American republics . . .It is sufficient to say that . . . the emancipation of this continent from European control has been the principal feature in its history during the last century. It is not probable that a revolution in a contrary direction would be successful.

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[46] Seward to Dayton, March 18, 1862, #121, Diplomatic Records, Instructions, France, M77, R 56, pp. 118-20.

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Seward thus extended his argument to the other "American republics," saying that any monarchical intervention would run counter to the new forms of government being established, and would constitute "revolutions" in them. He finally underlined the long-view: movement toward republicanism had been going on for a "century" and any attempt to move in a "contrary direction" would probably fail. Seward was articulating the underlying principles of the Monroe Doctrine here without making explicit reference to it. Consistent with his September 1861 directive, this message was polite but not deferential, logical, historical, and devoted to republicanism. Nevertheless, it was unmistakable in its warning to Napoleon III.

A brief review of the exact process whereby the French stayed in Mexico while the other "allies" chose to leave might be instructive. Spanish and British troops were already in Veracruz when Seward wrote the above message. Given the various time lags attendant to diplomatic correspondence in this era, it seems unlikely that Seward knew exactly what was going on with the debt-collecting mission when he issued his statement, which would not have arrived in France until the end of March.[47] Yet the "instability" of any "monarchical intervention" was already beginning to reveal itself. British, French and Spanish commanders could not arrive at an agreement on how to proceed after moving their forces to higher ground from pestilential Veracruz.[48]

In what became known as the Preliminaries of Soledad or the Convention of Soledad, signed in February 1862, Mexican Foreign Minister Manuel Doblado got the three European powers to agree that their mission had no "ulterior intention to interfere with Mexican sovereignty," thereby echoing the key provision of the Convention of London.[49] Napoleon was displeased that Admiral Jurien de la Graviere had signed the

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[47] See Introduction, p. 20.

[48] Jack Dabbs, *The French Army in Mexico: A Study in Military Government*, The Hague: Mouton & Co. 1963, p. 24.

[49] Ibid, p. 22; Michele Cunningham, *Mexico and the Foreign Policy of Napoleon III*, NY: Palgrave, 2001, p. 93. The meeting was held in Soledad (a Mexican city west of Veracruz) and called "Preliminary" because a subsequent meeting scheduled between all the parties to finalize matters had been scheduled to take place on April 15, 1862 in Orizaba.

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Convention of Soledad, and replaced him with the more aggressive Charles Ferdinand Latrille, Count de Lorencez. When Lorencez came ashore in March, he brought with him several Mexican Conservatives who had previously fought the Juáristas and who had prices on their heads, notably Juan Alamonte and former president Miguel Miramón.[50] The presence of these Conservatives clearly indicated to the Juárez regime the political thrust of the French presence. This politicization of the mission was not lost on the Spanish commander, General Juan Prim, and the head of the British delegation, Sir Charles Wyke.[51] They had consistently argued with the French during the first three months of the joint exercise, particularly over what they viewed as France's inflated economic demands on Mexico. The insertion into Mexico of Miramón and his associates under French cover convinced Spain and Great Britain that France was not proceeding in good faith. Taking all this into consideration, Wyke and Prim, after a stormy session in the Mexican mountain town of Orizaba on April 9, 1862, withdrew from the coalition and sent their forces back to Europe.

This debacle appeared to bear out Seward's warning that European intervention would be the "beginning" and not the "ending" of "revolution" in Mexico. The French began their unilateral encounter with the Mexicans less than a month later, failing miserably in their attack on Puebla on May 5, 1862. This Mexican victory confounded Napoleon III and gave Seward's policy towards Mexico another year to mature.[52] Between 1862 and 1863 arch-Catholic Mexican conservatives exiled in Europe were searching for ways to oust the Liberals from power in Mexico. They would ultimately convince Napoleon III and his Spanish-born wife, Eugenie de Montijo, that Archduke

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[50] This was the same Miramón who as Conservative president had agreed to the Jecker loans.

[51] Prim, forty-seven at the time and considered by some to have liberal sympathies, later spoke out publicly in a number of places condemning the French in Mexico. He met with Seward, and attended a banquet in his honor at Delmonico's in New York. Some historians have noted that his marriage to a young Mexican, the niece of Mexico's Minister of Finance Gonzales Echeverria, might have influenced his perceptions, Cunningham, *Mexico*, p. 81; Ridley, *Maximilian*, p. 81.

[52] Michael C. Meyer et. al., *The Course of Mexican History, 6th ed.*, New York, Oxford U. Press, 1999, pp. 374-76. This Mexican victory is the basis for the modern celebration of *Cinco de Mayo*.

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Ferdinand Maximilian von Hapsburg would be the ideal choice to become Emperor of Mexico. After the 1862 Battle of Puebla, however, Napoleon III could have cut his losses and ordered his troops home. Pride and a misperception of the extent of Mexican bravery and persistence caused him not to. He blamed the defeat at Puebla on French commanders, not on the commitment of the Juáristas. After receiving extensive reinforcements, the French did take Puebla in May 1863 and Mexico City shortly thereafter. The plan to put Maximilian on the throne and install a European-backed monarchy in Mexico proceeded, even though intimations that such a plan would fail abysmally were already evident on the *Cinco de Mayo.*

The messages Seward wrote in September 1861 and March 1862 laid the groundwork for the policy he was to follow for the next five years. Always a good lawyer, Seward did not object to the European collection of debts, because such activity was customary under international law. Political involvement and the possible acquisition of control over Mexican territory, however, were entirely different matters, and the U.S. committed its "extraordinary good offices" to preserve Mexico's integrity. According to Seward, history was also on the side of republican Mexico. The Juárez regime may have appeared both incompetent and chaotic to editorialists like Horace Greeley, but, so far as Seward was concerned, it was the legal government of the Mexican people. This republican regime was consistent with a century-long trend towards emancipation from European rule that, according to Seward, would not be denied.

More than just a prominent member of the Republican Party, Seward was a true republican. He firmly believed that once monarchies were overthrown, they could not be re-established. He stated that any European-sponsored "intervention by monarchical Europe" would be both "injurious" and "inimical" to the governmental systems already in place in America.[53] In short, any plan to set up a neo-colonial government run by a

[53] British controlled Canada was an obvious exception.

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"person alien to Mexico" was doomed to failure. From his reading of history, Seward felt that no monarchy in Mexico would last long and fighting such a monarchy would not be worth American lives and treasure. Once the Civil War was over, many other U.S. citizens would not feel the same way, and Seward would have to work hard to avoid bloodshed. Finally, Seward viewed the installation of a European-inspired monarchy in Mexico as constituting a "revolution." Napoleon III and Maximilian may not have considered themselves revolutionaries, but, when it came to Mexico, Seward did. Their scheme promised to overthrow what Seward and the U.S. government recognized as Mexico's legitimate government. Had Napoleon III reflected more deeply on Seward's message and the implications of the defeat of his forces at Puebla, he could have saved himself, Maximilian, and Charlotte from this unfolding debacle.

After the French occupied Mexico City in 1863, new U.S. strategies were called for to deal with new facts on the ground. Initially, Seward had to face the fact that Napoleon III had lied about his intentions in Mexico. That was not necessarily a surprise, but greater circumspection would now be necessary in assessing French initiatives. At the same time, Seward had good reason for not wanting to antagonize France over recognition. France remaining neutral in the Civil War was one of Seward's principal diplomatic goals. Specifically, he did not want France or Great Britain to recognize the Confederacy.

However, with the French resident in Mexico City, and reinforcing their troops to expand their control, Seward had few options. He initially promised U.S. neutrality in any struggle involving the French and the Liberals they were now fighting. However, he also called for the French to reciprocate this neutrality and not become involved in the Civil War. Finally, the matter of diplomatic recognition was about to assert itself. The U.S. had traditionally recognized as legitimate the power that controlled a country's capital. Whatever government the French now saw fit to put into place in Mexico City

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would demand diplomatic recognition. It would break precedent for the U.S. to continue recognizing the Liberal government of Juárez that had fled north.

A promise that the French would not take advantage of their position in Mexico to influence the Civil War was important to Seward. The Confederacy had to import most of its war materiel. The Union naval blockade was a strategy designed to interdict this importation. It was, however, inevitable that some smuggling took place given the relatively few Union ships available for implementing the blockade. One particularly active location for smuggling was along the Rio Grande on the Texas–Mexican border. If France recognized the Confederacy, exportation of cotton from this area would no longer be the province of a few smugglers, and France could insist on carrying on commerce with a country with which it had formal diplomatic relations. With regular cotton commerce at least partially re-established, the Confederates would have a reliable revenue stream to purchase war materiel and to use as collateral for loans. These two contingencies alone would prolong the war in Seward's view. Hence, in the short term, neutrality was the price that Seward chose to pay to avoid having the French supply the Confederacy with war supplies in exchange for cotton.

Still, the military occupation by the French of a country bordering the U.S., having as its aim the installation of a puppet monarchy there, was a bold gambit. Why would Napoleon III take such a risk? Ultimate control of a future canal across southern Mexico, or a railway linking the Atlantic and Pacific, would potentially be of enormous geopolitical advantage to the country in Chargé of it. It was the duty of a Catholic country like France to try to stop an erosion of the Catholic faith if it was being challenged within Mexico by the Liberals and without by the largely Protestant American settlers on Mexico's northern border. The French Emperor outlined his reasons for taking the risk in a letter to Major General Elie Forey. Written in July of 1862, the letter reveals a French vision for Mexico that was essentially the antithesis of Seward's and is worth quoting in its entirety:

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> There will not be lacking people who will ask why we are going to spend men and money in this enterprise [intervention in Mexico]. In the actual state of the civilization of the world, the prosperity of America is not indifferent to Europe, for it nourishes our industry and gives life to our commerce. We are interested in seeing the United States powerful and prosperous, but we have no interest in seeing that republic acquire the whole Gulf of Mexico, dominate from this vantage point the Antilles and South America, and become the sole dispenser of the products of the New World. Mistress of Mexico, and consequently, of Central America and of the passage between the two seas, there would henceforth be no other power in America than the United States. If, on the contrary, Mexico conquers its independence and maintains the integrity of its territory, if a stable government is constituted there by the arms of France, we shall have posed an insuperable barrier to the encroachments of the United States, we shall have maintained the independence of our colonies in the Antilles, and of those of ungrateful Spain, and this influence will radiate northward as well as southward, will create immense markets for our commerce, and will procure the materials indispensable for our country.[54]

Several important points emerge from this letter. Initially, Napoleon III revealed no intention of ever accepting the limits of the Convention of London that had "authorized" the tripartite debt-collection mission to Mexico in the first place. That Convention specifically precluded involvement in Mexico's internal affairs. Nor did he

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[54] Napoleon III to Forey, July 3, 1862 quoted in Hanna & Hanna, *Napoleon III and Mexico: American Triumph over Monarchy,* Chapel Hill: U. N. Carolina Press, 1971, p. 80 and Cunningham, *Mexico,* p. 126. The original French version: *Maîtresse du Mexique et par conséquent de l'Amérique centrale et du passage entre les deux mers, il n'y aurait plus désormais d'autre puissance en Amérique que celle des états unis. Si au contraire le Mexique conquiert son independance et maintient l'intégrité de son territoire, si un gouvernement stable s'y constitue par les armes de la France, nous aurons posé une digue infranchissable aux impiètements des états unis, nous aurons maintenu l'indépendance de nos colonies des Antilles et de celles de l'ingrate Espagne; nous aurons établi notre influence bienfaisante au centre de l'Amérique et cette influence rayonnera au nord comme au Midi, créera des debouchés immenses à notre commerce et procurera les matières indispensables à notre industrie.*

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feel himself bound by the subsequent Convention of Soledad between France, Great Britain, Spain, and Mexico that further underscored the intervention's non-political nature. The letter clearly pointed out that one of the *real* reasons for the French presence in Mexico was that Napoleon III considered it France's duty to prevent the U.S. from becoming the sole power in North America and possibly the entire hemisphere. He unabashedly asserted that French aims would be accomplished militarily and that a government in Mexico would be constituted "by the arms of France."

Another motivation for the intervention was the economic benefits that would accrue to France, among them silver from the Mexican State of Sonora, cotton, and revenues and geopolitical advantages stemming from either a canal or railway connecting the Atlantic and Pacific. The edited version of this letter made available to the public in a compilation of diplomatic correspondence published in January 1863, introduced an additional theme of restoring "Latin culture" to Central America. In the edited version Napoleon III argued that if France was successful in Mexico, "We shall have given back to the Latin race on the other side of the ocean its force and its prestige."[55]

The importance of the "Latin race" motivation for Napoleon III's intervention in Mexico is a matter of some historiographical debate. Historians Alfred and Kathryn Hanna point out that it was not part of the original letter to Forey, and that the Austrian Maximilian would not have been the best choice to advance "Latin" culture. In the most recent published work on the French Intervention, historian Michele Cunningham dismisses the importance of the idea that the "Latin race" in Mexico was very significant to Napoleon III.[56] Whether or not it was important to Napoleon III himself, U.S. diplomat Henry Sanford reported hearing the "Latin race" argument as a motive for French involvement "*ad nauseam* in Parisian Salons."[57] Racialism was a dominant

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[55] Hanna & Hanna, *Napoleon III*, p. 80.
[56] Cunningham, *Mexico*, pp 3-4, 126-27; Hanna & Hanna, *Napoleon III*, pp. 80-1; Martin Quirarte, *Historiografía sobre el imperio de Maximiliano*, Mexico, D.F.: UNAM, 1970, p 88.
[57] Sanford to Seward, August 13, 1862, reel 95, box 140, folder 10.

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aspect of nineteenth-century thought, and Napoleon III may have promulgated the idea of re-introducing the "Latin race" to eventually rule Central and South America as a way of stimulating popular support in France for his policies in Mexico.

Whether it contained support for the "Latin race" and Catholicism or not, Napoleon III's vision for Mexico would initially be carried out on the ground militarily by Forey and later by his successor Major General Achille Bazaine. New French Foreign Minister Edouard Drouyn de Lhuys was charged with carrying out its diplomatic components.[58] According to Sanford:

> The change in the Department of Foreign Affairs I do not consider disadvantageous to us on general principle, for I do not know what M. Drouyn de Lhuys personal opinions are touching us. He is a diplomat of the old school, of thorough training and education in his career, and would be apt to look at our affairs from the more elevated point of high political consideration, than that of his predecessor [Thouvenel], who seemed to think cotton and trade of more importance than the preservation of our Union. [59]

In late October 1862, Drouyn de Lhuys' first diplomatic step was to try to insert European powers into the Civil War by offering the good offices of France, Russia and Great Britain to broker a truce.[60] At first blush, this seemed like a peaceful proposal, but Seward saw it for what it really was: a way for France to accord *de facto* recognition to the Confederacy. The political arrangements outlined in Napoleon III's letter to Forey would have had a better chance of taking hold if the Confederacy could function as a buffer between the French and Union forces. Seward was angered that the three

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[58] He replaced Thouvenel in the fall of 1862 when the latter's policy toward Italy displeased Napoleon III.
[59] Sanford to Seward, October 17, 1862, Reel # 95. Seward had an interview with Drouyn de Lhuys after both of them were out of office in 1871. The interview, recorded by another American and reported by Seward's son, revealed some of Seward's thinking as the crisis with France over Mexico developed. It's cited in greater detail in the Conclusion.
[60] Case and Spencer, *The U.S. and France*, pp. 355-63.

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European powers had been discussing an armistice without consulting the U.S. He made his displeasure clear in the following message sent to Dayton on November 30, 1862:

> In regard to the main subject [offer of armistice] my instructions will be very simple and short. An inconclusive conference concerning the United States has been held between three powers, all of whom avow themselves as friends of the United States and yet the United States were carefully excluded from the conference . . .The United States have constantly said to all Europe that they know that the saving of the American Union depends on the American people themselves, and not at all on the policies of foreign states severally or combined.[61]

In the same message, Seward, uncharacteristically, departed from the florid diplomatic language he normally used to remind France that:

> Foreign nations scarcely need to be reminded that family quarrels are always of short duration, that the very scandals which they bring operate as an incentive to reconciliation. Much more does the unavoidable apprehension of foreign interference work in that direction. The emissaries of treason [Confederate diplomats and agents] who now remain in European capitals will very soon disappear and the whole American people will forever be asking who among the foreign nations were the most just – and the most forbearing to their country in its hour of trial?

Drouyn de Lhuys continued to press for some sort of involvement in a cease-fire or mediation, which Seward continued to resist, writing to Dayton in February 1863:

> I must be allowed to say also that Mr. Drouyn de L'Huys errs in his description of the parties to the present conflict.[62] We have here in a political sense no North and South, no Southern and Northern States. We have an insurrectionary party which is located chiefly upon and adjacent to the shore of the Gulf of Mexico; and

[61] Seward to Dayton, Nov. 30, 1862, #263, DR, Instructions, France, M77, R 56, pp. 297-300. Note that referring to the U.S. in the plural was customary until after the Civil War. Seward always uses the plural.
[62] The name is variously spelled "L'Huys" and Lhuys. Most of the works cited use the latter form.

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> we have on the other hand, a loyal people who constitute not only Northern States, but also Eastern, Midland ,Western and Southern States.[63]

Seward was attempting to explain to Napoleon III and his Minister of Foreign Affairs that their perception of the American Civil War was fundamentally flawed and that the Union would inevitably prevail. He would repeat this to Drouyn de Lhuys when they met informally in Paris in 1871, underscoring that he was astounded that Napoleon III, who had visited the U.S., did not appear able to see this. It would not be in France's best interests to be perceived in the victorious U.S. as having fomented political trouble on the southern border. In April 1863 Seward felt it necessary to reiterate the point that foreign intervention in Mexico had no future:

> I do not care to speak often upon the war of France against Mexico. The President confidently believes that the Emperor [Napoleon III] has no purpose of assuming in the event of success, the government of that republic. Difficult as the exercise of self-government there has proved to be, it is, nevertheless, quite certain that the attempt to maintain foreign authority there would encounter insurmountable embarrassment.[64]

Seward's diplomacy, as outlined in this chapter, might well be called his "lawyerly" phase. He was building his case against France, writing out the theoretical basis that would support his future actions. Yet Seward never had the luxury of approaching his problems in a leisurely fashion, as there were always the exigencies of the war, and the assaults of his internal critics. Nevertheless, he wrote, gathered evidence, and sifted intelligence. Meanwhile, representatives of foreign governments involved in the conflict were just as busy, vying to achieve what was deemed best for their own countries, whether their policies were consistent with those of the Union or not.

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[63] Seward to Dayton, Feb. 6, 1863, #297, DR, Instructions, France, pp. 328-336.
[64] Ibid., Seward to Dayton, April 27, 1863, p. 369

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One of those representatives was Matias Romero, indefatigable in his pursuit of ultimate success for the Juáristas.

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CHAPTER TWO

MATIAS ROMERO – JUÁREZ'S MAN IN WASHINGTON

Seward's principal Mexican interlocutor was Matias Romero (1837-1898), the main connection between the Liberal government in Mexico headed by President Benito Juárez and the administration of President Abraham Lincoln. Romero was twenty-two when he first took up official duties in Washington and almost everyone he dealt with officially was at least twenty years his senior, thirty-six in Seward's case, twenty-eight in Lincoln's. Romero was a diplomatic prodigy who was promoted from Secretary of the Mexican Legation to Chargé d'Affaires and finally to Minister, all within eight years of his arrival in Washington during the Buchanan administration in 1859.[1] Republican Mexico was relying on Romero to gain from the U.S. the political, military and economic support essential for ousting the French army from his country and evicting a foreign prince from its throne. Romero's central role in defending republicanism in Mexico was marked by a political sophistication and tenacity unanticipated from one so young. At the outset of his assignment, he received mostly moral support from his government, his paycheck being late or non-existent for months at a time. Yet it is hard to imagine how Mexico could have survived as a republic in the 1860s had it not been for his efforts.

His connection to two Mexican presidents, Benito Juárez (1806-1872) and Porfirio Diaz (1828-1915) stemmed from the fact that all three came from Oaxaca in southern Mexico. Romero was a *criollo,* someone of one hundred per cent Spanish ancestry born in Mexico. In mid-nineteenth century Mexico, he would have been socially superior to the men he devoted his life to, Benito Juárez, a one hundred per cent Zapotec Indian, Mexico's first indigenous leader since Cuauhtemoc, and Porfirio Diaz, also an

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[1] Thomas Schoonover, *Mexican Lobby: Matias Romero in Washington, 1861-1867*, Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1986, p. ix; see also Harry Bernstein, *Matias Romero, 1837-1898*, Mexico City: Fondo Cultura Economica, 1982, pp. 42-3.

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Indian from Oaxaca.[2] At different times, all three attended Oaxaca's Institute of Sciences and Arts (*El Instituto Secular de Ciencias y Artes*), an independent school actively promulgating reformist ideas of the early nineteenth century. The reform idea dearest to Juárez was equality before the law. For his part, Romero saw the nefarious influence of the monolithic Catholic Church in Mexico, and, although a Catholic, advocated religious pluralism throughout his career, eventually marrying an American Protestant.[3]

But it was a love of foreign affairs as they pertained to Mexico that was the Institute's abiding legacy to Romero. Before he was twenty, he was studying Mexican customhouse statistics on revenues collected to pay off debts to Britain. He sent letters to the Treasury Secretary in the Santa Anna government about how to retire the debt. His suggestions were never acknowledged, but the very fact of an eighteen-year old provincial advising the central government on fiscal policy was indicative of Romero's willingness to do exhaustive research and write on public policy issues, a skill he honed throughout his life.[4]

However, in 1853, the brilliant future awaiting the young *Oaxaqueño* seemed considerably less probable, seeing that his mentor Benito Juárez had been banished from Mexico.[5] Yet Santa Anna's days in power were numbered, and he had to flee a Liberal revolt led by Juan Alvarez, whose government brought back the New Orleans exiles by 1855.[6] By November of 1855, Romero had contacted his fellow *Oaxaqueño* Juárez and

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[2] The last Aztec leader, Cuauhtemoc, son of Moctezuma II (sometimes misspelled as Montezuma) was hung by Cortes in 1525. See also David Hannay, *Diaz*, NY: Henry Holt and Co., 1917, pp. 1-5; also Daniel Cosio Villegas, *The United States Versus Porfirio Diaz*, translated by N. L. Benson, U. of Nebraska Press, 1963.

[3] Romero married Lucretia "Lula" Allen of Philadelphia, an Episcopalian, on July 15, 1868; see Bernstein, *Matias Romero*, pp. 154 and 159.

[4] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[5] Juárez became Romero's mentor initially through their Oaxacan connection and the fact that both had attended the Institute of Science and Arts there, Bernstein, *Matias Romero*, p. 8.

[6] Ivie Cadenhead, Jr., *Benito Juárez*, NY: Twayne, 1973, pp. 42-3. Cadenhead also points out that Santa Anna agreed to the Gadsden Purchase (*Tratado de la Mesilla* in Mexico) in order to use the $10 million from the sale to stay in power. See also Brian Hamnett, *Juárez*, NY: Longman, 1994, p. 150, "Juárez was determined to avoid the surrender of Lower California to the United States, an action which he thought would bring down upon his administration the same opprobrium that had fallen upon Santa Anna after the Mesilla Treaty."

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offered his services, without pay, to work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Juárez introduced him to Minister Ocampo, thus beginning Romero's almost forty-five years of public service to Mexico. His initial duties in the Ministry were pedestrian, answering letters and filing diplomatic papers. But he took advantage of his surroundings to start writing a diplomatic history of Mexico that he called *Tabla sinóptica de los tratados (An Index of Mexican Treaties)*. It was an exhaustive summary of all of Mexico's treaties that he finally published before his departure to the U.S. in 1859.

Romero had been too young to accompany his heroes into exile in New Orleans, so upon his arrival in Mexico City from Oaxaca in 1855 he addressed himself to the study of law and was admitted to the bar in 1857 at the age of twenty. He accomplished this while simultaneously performing his "internship" at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Minister of Justice Juárez congratulated the newly-admitted lawyer, citing the great honor Romero's achievements brought to Oaxaca, referring to him as "*mi muy apreciable ahijado* (my very noteworthy protégé [literally godson]."[7]

Throughout the battle with the Conservatives, the twenty-year-old Romero proved his courage, his patriotism, and his personal devotion to Juárez. He met and impressed those who were a generation older who would lead the fight for Liberal reform for most of the next decade. This explains why he was sent on such an important diplomatic mission to Washington at such a young age. It may also explain why he worked so hard on his country's behalf. He had survived the crucible of what was to become an ongoing battle, with the French and Maximilian taking the place of the Conservatives. He knew first hand what the stakes were, which may explain his subsequent impatience when Seward did not seem to be moving fast enough for him. Others may have found fault with him, or questioned his training for the job, but his "constituency of one," Benito Juárez, never did.

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[7] Bernstein, *Matias Romero*, p. 13.

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Juárez saw Romero as far more valuable as a diplomat, even though his protege expressed a desire to fight as a soldier in the War of Reform. If the truth be told, Romero was slight and prone to hypochondria his whole life.[8] Once assigned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he began angling for a position in London and had accordingly started learning English. His English lessons took an odd twist when he found out in 1859 that he had been appointed instead as Secretary of the Mexican delegation in Washington to serve under Minister Jose Mata. Romero arrived in Washington on Christmas Eve, 1859, armed with a smattering of anglicized English and far more devotion to the Liberal cause than training or preparation for diplomacy.

Romero would find himself working on Mexico's chronic need for cash with a Buchanan Administration that was presiding over the unraveling of the Union. A note about how the Buchanan Administration came to recognize the Juárez regime is in order, as it partially explains ongoing suspicions about U.S. initiatives on Mexico's behalf. The Conservatives had partially regained power in Mexico in early 1858 under the leadership of Felix Zuloaga. They controlled the capital Mexico City, whereas Juárez's Liberals had been in Chargé in Veracruz since May 1858. At this time, the U.S. government recognized Zuloaga, and continued to try and negotiate transit rights across the southern Isthmus of Tehuantepec, as well as to purchase Lower California and parts of the northern Mexican states of Sonora and Chihuahua. The Buchanan Administration broke off diplomatic relations with Zuloaga and the Conservatives in October 1858, after that government imposed a one per cent property tax "on all residents including foreigners."[9]

No government had recognized Juárez in 1858, and his emissary to Washington, Jose Maria Mata, whom Romero ultimately replaced, failed in his attempts to gain either loans or recognition from Buchanan and his Secretary of State, Lewis Cass. However, the desire for acquiring Lower California was still strong in the U.S., and Juárez and his

[8] Ironically, death on land may have been preferable to the incapacitating seasickness to which he was prone, Bernstein, *Matías Romero*, p. 43.
[9] Hamnett, *Juárez*, pp. 148-9.

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Foreign Minister Melchor Ocampo gave Buchanan's special envoy to Mexico, William Churchwell, the impression that they might be willing to negotiate the sale for $10, 000,000. It was at this point that Buchanan, feeling that such an acquisition might boost his chances in the 1860 election, sent Maryland Senator Robert McLane to recognize the Juárez government and negotiate what came to be known as the McLane-Ocampo Treaty.[10] Recognizing the Juárez government broke with precedent, because it did not control the capital, the determining factor in the U.S. according recognition in the past. This would become very important later on, when, in spite of Maximilian being firmly in control of the capital Mexico City, the Lincoln Administration insisted that the official government of Mexico was that of Benito Juárez. Given the domestic political motivations of Buchanan in sending McLane-Ocampo to the Senate, there was little chance of its passage. In the words of historian Brian Hamnett, it became "a political football between slave and anti-slave states."[11]

The recognition of Juárez by the U.S. did have one immediate tangible benefit. The Conservatives under Miramón were putting great pressure on the Liberals at Veracruz, but needed naval support to tighten the noose. They contracted for this in the form of Spanish ships in Havana. Juárez called on the U.S. for assistance, and the U.S. Navy prevented the ships from leaving Havana, in what has become known as the Anton Lizardo incident. In this instance U.S. help was critical in helping Juárez's Liberals avoid political extinction, a role the U.S. would repeat in various ways over much of the next decade.[12]

Romero's first major diplomatic assignment, therefore, was to deal with Secretary of State Lewis Cass and his successor Jeremiah Black on the ramifications of the defeated McLane-Ocampo treaty.[13] Chronic unrest had made it virtually impossible for Mexico to

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[10] Ibid., pp. 148-50; also note #9, p. 7, Introduction.
[11] Ibid., p.152.
[12] Ibid., p 152.
[13] Cass would leave early in 1861over Buchanan's refusal to reinforce Ft. Sumter in South Carolina, leaving the State Department in administrative limbo under caretaker Secretary of State Jeremiah Black.

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borrow on the international market, and poor practices and maintenance had resulted in the deterioration of the once-lucrative mining industry, thus making Mexico's minerals less attractive as collateral. Just prior to the victory of Juárez's Liberals in the War of Reform, the Conservative government of Miramón had concluded a usurious loan with the Swiss financial house of Jecker.[14] Once the Liberals were back in power, Juárez refused to recognize that loan or its terms, thus setting in motion the Convention of London and its expeditionary force. It was precisely to avoid this European intervention that the McLane-Ocampo Treaty had been proposed in the first place.

Unfortunately, land and mineral rights were the only things of real value that Mexico had to offer as collateral at this time. Given Mexican hypersensitivity to alienating any more of its territory after the Mexican-American war, the treaty could not be ratified in Mexico.[15] Insofar as some of the land proposed for collateral was contiguous to Texas, some U.S. senators from the north disapproved of the treaty because it might allow for the extension of slavery into the territories acquired via Guadalupe Hidalgo. Hence Romero's first exposure to international diplomacy was a failure. More importantly, he learned that Mexico's political future was to a large extent dependent on its ability to raise money.

This would be an enduring lesson for the Liberals. Romero would become Mexico's Treasury Secretary (*Hacienda)*, and Porfirio Diaz, the Liberals most successful general, would serve as president for four decades with the exception of one term. Both worked assiduously to develop Mexico economically. The tenure of Diaz, referred to as the *Porfiriata*, has been roundly criticized for the preferences it gave to foreigners, and

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Black, in turn, deferred to longtime clerk William Hunter for administrative guidance, Frederick W. Seward, *Reminiscences of A War-Time Statesman and Diplomat 1830-1915*, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1916, p. 142.

[14] A backer of this loan was Napoleon III's illegitimate half-brother, the Duc de Morny, who stood to make a fortune if the deal went through.

[15] In 1853, Santa Anna added to the insult of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo by agreeing to the Treaty of Mesilla (known as the Gadsden Purchase in the U.S.) Mexico gave up fifty-five thousand acres in what are now southern New Mexico and Arizona for $10 million. Santa Anna was strapped for cash to fight his Liberal opponents. The U.S. wanted the land for railroads, see Suchlicki, *Mexico,* pp.79-80.

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for the repressive tactics it used to maintain order. Nevertheless, Mexican historian Josefina Vazquez maintains that the *Porfiriata* "brought the country decades of peace and permitted it to place itself on a sounder financial footing, promote economic growth, and occupy an honorable and respected place among nations."[16] She also points out that at the beginning of the *Porfiriata,* Mexico had 640 kilometers of railroads, and "almost twenty thousand" at the end. According to Vazquez, U.S. investment had reached $646,200,000 by 1911.[17] One lesson that the Liberals had drawn from the humiliation of chronic national indebtedness was to establish a firm economic footing, and for Mexico to achieve, then maintain, an international credit rating. It is also true that the *Porfiriata* did so at a price so great as to lead to revolution. It is no wonder, then, that in the diplomatic maneuverings between the U.S., France, and Mexico in the 1860s, money was always an issue.

Romero's primary diplomatic involvement would be with the administrations of Lincoln and his successor Andrew Johnson. At Juárez's behest, Romero undertook a visit to Lincoln in Illinois two months after the 1860 election. Traveling by train to Springfield in January of 1861, Romero met with Lincoln and explained the dire situation facing the Liberal government. In his diary, Romero characterized Lincoln's reaction as follows:

> He [Lincoln] told me that during his administration he would try to do everything in his power to advance Mexican interests . . .and for him Mexico was like a brother in friendship.[18]

The new diplomatic team that would deal with Mexico was now being put in place. After Lincoln's inauguration, Seward replaced Black as Secretary of State and

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[16] Josefina Z. Vazquez and Lorenzo Meyer, *The United States and Mexico*, Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1985, pp. 72-3.
[17] Ibid., p. 92.
[18] Matías Romero, *Diario personal*, p. 378; see also J.G. Randall, *Lincoln The President: Springfield to Gettysburg, 4 vols.*, NY: Dodd, Mead & Co., I, p. 249. Among the "notables" listed by Randall, Romero appears to be the only foreigner.

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Thomas Corwin of Ohio replaced Robert McLane as Minister to Mexico. Corwin was among Lincoln's first diplomatic appointees and received congressional confirmation quickly because he had served as a Whig senator from Ohio.[19] His son, William H. Corwin, went along as Secretary to the U.S. Legation. Thomas Corwin's connection to Mexico went back to a speech he had made in the Senate in 1847 opposing the Mexican-American war:

> If I were a Mexican I would tell you [the U.S. army], 'Have you no room in your own country to bury your dead men? If you come into mine we will greet you with bloody hands, and welcome you to hospitable graves.'[20]

Although Corwin's speech, which was consistent with Whig policy in 1846, did not in any way alter the Democratic president Polk's plans to acquire Mexican territory, it did leave a lasting positive impression on Whig Congressman Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln also vigorously opposed what he saw as a land-grab on the part of President Polk.

Hence in 1861, all involved in Corwin's nomination anticipated a warm reception for him in Mexico because of his earlier stand. He threw himself right into negotiating loan agreements that would have enabled the Liberals to forestall their European creditors. Observers noted, however, that whereas Corwin had opposed the Democrat Polk's acquisition of former Mexican territory as a prelude to the extension of slavery, he was not averse to negotiating Mexican land as collateral for the loan agreements. Corwin's proposal had focused on a rail connection in southern Mexico between the Atlantic and Pacific via the Tehuantepec isthmus. It also proposed extraterritorial power for U.S. military forces in Mexico, ostensibly to maintain order. The Corwin/Seward plan would pay the Europeans three percent on Mexico's public debt for five years, considered adequate by Seward to hold off the Europeans and reestablish financial order. Should Mexico default after five years, the U.S. would have "a lien on public lands and

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[19] Dean B. Mahin, *One War at a Time*, p. 110-115; Schoonover, *Dollars Over Dominion*, pp. 17-21.
[20] *Congressional Globe, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, Appendix, 211-218.*

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mineral rights of Lower California and three other provinces in northern and western Mexico."[21] After another year of default, the land would become U.S. property.

Facing civil war, and still unsure about opening more land to slavery, the U.S. Senate tabled the Corwin/Seward proposal. It is a matter of conjecture whether or not the U.S. would have been willing to enforce the terms of the proposal had Mexico defaulted. Regardless, Romero, now two years on the job, had still not been able to generate any financial help from the U.S. for his struggling government. He began to develop a mistrust of Seward, seeing him as obstructionist when it came to helping Juárez. Unused to the workings of a separation-of-powers government, Romero could not understand why the Secretary of State could not *do* something to expedite the loans. This, perhaps, explains his willingness, later in the decade, to accord the U.S. credit only for its "moral" support in evicting the French.

Though this process was disappointing and painful, Romero gained invaluable insights into the U.S. political system via these diplomatic encounters. In essence, he became a lobbyist and started to understand the nuances underlying the U.S. political system, and the vagaries of electoral politics. If he expected quick results in achieving the Mexican Republic's goals, it would be insufficient to talk directly with the Chief Executive, as he had with Lincoln. Seeing that money bills originated in the House and treaties had to be approved in the Senate, he would have to cultivate key members of Congress. Moreover, he saw the necessity of influencing public opinion, for he was beginning to realize the importance of the press in mid-nineteenth century politics. To have Mexico's voice heard amidst the din surrounding the Civil War was not going to be easy, and would probably be expensive. Yet Romero had to undertake these tasks when he often did not have a *peso* in his pocket.

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[21] Van Deusen, *Seward*, p. 366. Van Deusen quotes U.S. Minister to Great Britain, Charles Francis Adams, characterizing this proposal in a dispatch from London as "the preliminary to an entry for inevitable foreclosure."

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Given contemporary foreign affairs security, it can be difficult for the modern student of diplomatic affairs to grasp how easily Romero gained access to the most sensitive of government communications. He cultivated contacts at the highest level of the government. Indeed, his pre-inauguration visit to Lincoln shows a willingness to go right to the top to get what he wanted. Among his early contacts within the Lincoln cabinet was Montgomery Blair. Blair had left the Democratic Party in opposition to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in 1854, and he presided over Maryland's Republican convention in 1860. Lincoln appointed him as Postmaster General in 1861, primarily because the Blair family had extensive political influence in two critical border states, Maryland and Missouri.[22] As early as June 6, 1861, Romero reported to Juárez on conversations with Blair:

> I have had the satisfaction of finding Blair very well instructed about Mexican affairs, about the cause of our constant revolutions, and entirely in favor of a popular, liberal government. His influence in the cabinet could be very useful to us, if one knows how to exploit it. I propose therefore to cultivate an acquaintanceship with him.[23]

Romero got his information on how the Corwin loan proposal was proceeding within the administration from a number of sources. Blair favored Romero "with his friendship" and was "more communicative than Seward." On September 9, 1861, Romero reported that his meetings with Blair offered him "the opportunity to learn what otherwise would escape me."[24] Blair went on to explain the thinking behind the Corwin loan proposal, saying that in the present circumstances "it is the most we could have done." He then told Romero that if the Juárez government could not re-establish

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[22] Burton J. Hedrick, *Lincoln's War Cabinet*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1946, p. 70. Lincoln considered the maintenance of Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland and Delaware in the Union as critical to his strategy.

[23] Quoted in Bernstein, *Matías Romero*, p. 72, from Romero's *Correspondencia, Vol. 1*, pp. 411-413: "*Su influencia en el gabinete podía ser muy útil para nosotros, si sabemos usarla, y me propuse seguir cultivando relaciónes con él.*"

[24] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, Sept. 9, 1861, #34, in *Correspondencia, vol. I*, pp. 732-33; see also Schoonover, *Mexican Lobby*, p. 9.

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financial order during the six year term of the loan, then intervention in Mexico, either by the U.S. or Europe, was probably inevitable.

This sort of off-the-cuff oral discussion was not uncommon among diplomats and government officials. By December 1861, however, Romero was asking Blair for copies of documents circulated among Cabinet members.[25] Regarding U.S. participation in the Tripartite Agreement to collect debts, Blair and Romero disagreed with Seward. In November and early December 1861, Romero and Blair were advocating that the U.S. become involved "solely to introduce discord and to hasten disagreement among European powers, thereby impeding the realization of their plans."[26] Blair had written a memo to Seward outlining this approach, and Romero had reason to believe that it was discussed in the Cabinet based on a conversation with Seward in late November. Romero now asked Blair for a copy of the memo, which Blair declined because he said he had not retained one. Blair did not seem offended or outraged by the prospect of providing a secret Cabinet document to a foreign diplomat, and the two remained on very good terms. Seward rejected the idea of the U.S. becoming involved with the Europeans, even if only to sabotage their mission. He still thought buying them off with the proceeds of the Corwin loan was preferable, although that strategy was bogged down in the Senate.

One of Mongomery Blair's pet projects was to ship southern Negroes somewhere outside of the United States.[27] To this end, he discussed Mexico as a destination with Romero several times. Mexico had abolished slavery in 1829, and Romero, echoing Juárez's unwavering stand, said that the Mexican Republic would never allow the re-introduction of slavery, although a government set up by the French might. Blair did not want slavery re-introduced into Mexico, but the presence of a group of former American slaves on Mexican soil might raise problems for Mexico's government. Montgomery's

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[25] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, Dec. 4, 1861, # 349, vol. I, pp.620-1; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p.10.
[26] Ibid.
[27] As "negro" was the term used in the 19th century, this dissertation uses it as the term Seward, Blair and all other leading Union officials would have used.

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brother, Frank, Jr., a Congressmen from Missouri and later a Union General, proposed the acquisition of the island of Cozumel off the Yucatan coast as a possible site for Negro transmigration.[28] A ruse could thereby be maintained that slavery was not being re-introduced into mainland Mexico. Their father, Frank, Sr., became involved in Mexican affairs some years later when he proposed, prior to Appomattox, that some former Union and Confederate forces unite to oust the French from Mexico.[29] It could be argued that the Blairs' interest in Mexico and their close association with Romero was not totally disinterested, as several of the Blairs' schemes had potential for both profit and political advancement.

Romero now knew enough about the U.S. government to know that financial aid for Mexico had to be approved in Congress. Following the technique he used with President Lincoln, Romero went straight to the person who could help him most there, Senator Charles Sumner, Republican from Massachusetts. As noted earlier, Lincoln usually deferred to Seward in matters of foreign affairs. Seward's counterpart in the Senate was Sumner, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. By mid-December 1861, Romero was cultivating Sumner directly, agitating for the passage of the Corwin loan. Although deliberations of the Senate Committee were mostly secret, Sumner informed Romero that the loan would probably be defeated. Romero pleaded for more time, and asked that the matter be tabled until after the Christmas recess, inviting Sumner to dinner to further press Mexico's case.[30] Even though the terms were awful from Mexico's perspective, Juárez desperately needed money and may have felt that, once the crisis passed of European intervention passed, the terms could be re-negotiated.

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[28] This is the same Cozumel that is now a destination for cruise ships in the Gulf of Mexico. A brief discussion of several of these ill-fated colonization schemes can be found in McPherson, *Battle Cry*, pp. 508-9.

[29] According to McPherson, Francis Preston Blair, Frank, "badgered Lincoln to give him a pass through the lines to present this proposal to Jefferson Davis. Lincoln wanted nothing to do with Blair's hare-brained Mexican scheme, but allowed him to go to Richmond to see what might develop." McPherson, *Battle Cry*, pp. 821-22.

[30] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, Dec. 22, 1861, #378, vol. I, pp. 659-60; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 12.

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Whereas many high officials in Washington trusted Romero, Seward did not, a feeling that was reciprocated, at least initially. Although their official relation was very complex, covering a whole range of bilateral issues, the principal source of friction between them at this juncture was Seward's commitment to neutrality towards the French in Mexico. Once the Tripartite forces arrived in Mexico, the nature of Romero's concerns changed from the forestalling intervention to evicting those who had already intervened.

Romero was infuriated by what he viewed as the pretense of U.S. neutrality. He maintained that U.S. neutrality would be fine if it were truly neutral, which was decidedly not the case according to him. Romero cited as an example the case of former Mexican congressman, Juan Bustamante, who had been authorized by some of Mexico's central states to purchase arms, as long as he coordinated his work with Romero. He finally managed to obtain some in Belgium, but Treasury Secretary Chase held up their transshipment through New York, citing neutrality as his reason.[31] Insofar as Mexico had no arms industry, prohibiting arms sales and shipments effectively put the U.S. on the side of the French in Romero's estimation. Romero pointed out in late 1862 that the French had acquired in New York and New Orleans mules, wagons, and other support material to support their military efforts while such assistance was being denied to Mexico.[32] Romero had a point. Seward argued that there was no prohibition from the French buying war materiel and shipping it themselves. It was only when Americans became involved in the process, as had been the case with the Bustamante arms' shipment, that U.S. neutrality laws came into play. Romero believed this to be another example of how Seward was splitting hairs in order to keep France out of the Civil War.

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[31] Romero and Bustamante pointed out to Chase and Seward that the arms were incompatible with either those of the Union or the Confederacy and were, therefore, "entirely useless to the United States Army." Marvin L. Ritzman, *Matias Romero, Mexican Minister to the United States: His Problems and Difficulties During the French Intervention*, unpublished M.A. thesis, Mexico City College, June 1952, pp. 3-5.
[32] Ibid., p.13.

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Romero's perception of Seward's intransigence on the issue of neutrality motivated Romero to seek other ways to plead his case. By February 1862, the Senate was contemplating a new approach to the Mexican situation, a resolution on Mexico seeking to limit further European involvement. At a dinner attended by both Romero and Sumner, Romero managed to get the essence of the resolution even though Sumner maintained that he could not show Romero the resolution because "Senate rules strictly prohibited that."[33] From another source not named in his report, Romero said that he managed to obtain Seward's instructions to Minister Corwin about the Senate considering paying the interest on the Mexican debt to the Europeans, and that this should be enough to precipitate their withdrawal. Part of successful intelligence is getting crucial information into the hands of one's government quickly enough to be prepared for overtures from other parties. Romero succeeded in this case, as his report to Juárez on Seward's instructions to Corwin was sent on the same ship as the originals to Corwin himself.[34]

Historian Thomas Schoonover points out that Romero had progressed from diplomatic interviews and discussions over dinner to getting "confidential U.S. government documents" by the fall of 1862. On September 13, 1862, he reported to his government that he had seen Corwin's report from Mexico. On October 10, he reported seeing the U.S. government's instructions to Corwin about not recognizing any new government established in Mexico.[35] By early December, some of the American press was skewering American Minister to Mexico Corwin for his meddling in a loan negotiated through the banking house of Jecker, a loan that Juárez was flatly refusing to honor. Romero had lost faith in Corwin by this time, sensing that he was in collusion with

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[33]Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, Feb. 19, 1862, #52, vol. II, pp. 55-6; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 22.

[34] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, Sept. 13, 1862, #305, vol. II, pp. 383-4; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 26.

[35] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, Oct. 10, 1862, #324, vol. II, p. 72; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 26.

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the French. In order to discredit Corwin further, Romero sought a Congressional resolution censuring Corwin's conduct in the affair. Working through one of Corwin's political adversaries from Ohio, Representative Jacob Cox, Romero drafted the resolution and had Cox submit it. Romero reported that the resolution "was approved without discussion . . .[the] fact that Cox, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, submitted the resolution . . .should produce some effect on Corwin. He will be, perhaps, more cautious in the future."[36]

Romero sought a private interview with Lincoln to explain how the situation in Mexico had deteriorated since the arrival of the European troops. He did this because he felt that because Seward valued French neutrality so highly that he was not actively trying to help Mexico. In order to do this, Romero had to find a way to circumvent normal diplomatic channels, which would have run through Seward. He already knew the President, and using his normal *modus operandi*, went right to the top.

The way Romero managed to see Lincoln alone may not put him in the best light, but he insisted that "although my character near this government is not the most appropriate for possessing the right to be received by the president, I have determined to commit this small irregularity for my country's sake."[37] Lincoln's son, Will, had died in February, and, under the guise of expressing his condolences, Romero used the occasion to warn Lincoln of French designs on Mexican territory. He also said that he would visit the president "in an unofficial capacity" on occasion because Mexican affairs were so important. When policy is at stake, a diplomat does not visit the President of the country to which he is accredited "in an unofficial capacity." Romero was clearly trying to get the President's ear when Seward was not in the room. From Seward's perspective, the Mexicans' defeat of the French at Puebla on May 5, 1862 removed the necessity of any

[36] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, Dec. 22, 1862, #410, vol. II, p. 735; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 27.
[37] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, May 16, 1862, #162, vol. II, p. 73; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 25.

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immediate U.S. action. It would take a while for Napoleon III's plans to gestate there, and in the meantime Seward had to deal with several other very pressing matters.

Seward was a career politician and a cagey chess player when it came to foreign policy. Romero, on the other hand, was a passionate republican who had a great sense of duty to the government he served. In the spring of 1862, the disparity in these two points of view caused friction between the two men, and motivated Romero to seek aid for Mexico through channels other than the State Department. Two years later, Romero even began to become involved in U.S. electoral politics in an effort to deny re-nomination to Lincoln. He provided background information to Senator McDougall of California, who had already publicly chastised Seward's Mexican policy. Romero reported that those like McDougall, who wanted U.S. military intervention in Mexico to oust the French, "are quite confident that they can prevent Lincoln's reelection. They are now directing all their efforts to this task."[38] Seward's and Romero's goals for Mexico were, in fact, not significantly different, but their methods of achieving those goals were. When the French were finally gone and republican, democratic government restored in Mexico, the two struck up a friendship. Between 1862 and 1866, however, they were polite adversaries in contests that Seward was winning most of the time.

Despite his setbacks, Romero was proving himself very valuable to his government. He was gifted with the ability to obtain access to high officials in Washington, a skill that is still valued. He appeared self-deprecating and unassuming to his interlocutors, but listened carefully to all that was said, and wrote prodigious notes. His success, however, came at the price of significant financial sacrifice. Romero had offered his resignation in December 1861, on the grounds that, in his opinion, he did not have sufficient resources to conduct republican Mexico's business in the U.S.[39] Frustrated at the prospect of getting no real assistance from the U.S., he returned to

[38] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, July 31, 1864, #180, vol IV, pp. 282-3; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 47.
[39] Harry Bernstein, *Matias Romero*, p. 77.

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Mexico in May 1863 and remained until October. He complained to his government that he was exhausted. As much as Romero wanted to return to Mexico, he dreaded the trip, as he suffered from seasickness. Arriving at the Gulf port of Tampico, he headed overland to Juárez's seat of government in San Luis Potosi. There he told the president that he did not want to return because the climate in Washington did not agree with him, and that he would rather serve in the army under General Porfirio Diaz. But if there was no one willing to go to Washington and the Juárez government insisted, "I would return, making a genuine effort to go there, because there was no sacrifice that I was unwilling to do for this country."[40]

One can argue that Romero's resignation was a ploy on his part to bring the seriousness of his situation in Washington to the attention of Juárez. Romero was only twenty-four and fervently patriotic, so according him the benefit of the doubt may be in order. Obviously Juárez was not about to transform someone who displayed a real flair for diplomacy, spoke English, and had established varying degrees of access of the U.S. President, Secretary of State, and Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee into a foot soldier, patriot or not. The request was denied, Romero was promoted to "permanent Chargé," and his salary was increased, with guarantees that it would arrive on time in the future. Moreover, his "expense account" was augmented, thus enabling him to extend his lobbying activities to New York City, where more readily available financial support for Mexico might be found.

If Romero was not having much luck with either Seward or Lincoln in Washington in getting money and material for his government, it might seem improbable for him to extend his efforts to Seward's own back yard. Romero obviously knew that Seward had been Governor and two-term U.S. Senator from the Empire State. Seward's political adviser, Thurlow Weed, was nationally prominent in Republican affairs and

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[40] Romero, *Diario*, p. 528

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called "The Dictator" in New York, although not to his face.[41] After all, it was still some twenty years before the passage of the Pendleton Act, and Seward and Weed were in a position to distribute innumerable political jobs and favors.[42] However, Seward's influence in New York waned after his failure to obtain the Republican presidential nomination in 1860, and Weed, his campaign manager, had lost his aura of political omnipotence with that defeat. In fact, Seward's influence was primarily upstate, near his Auburn home and Rochester, and Weed had worked his magic in Albany.

New York City was a different story. There, where immigrants were discovering the power of the vote, Democrats held sway. On one hand, the benefits of fighting a civil war and completely disrupting the American economy had never been clear to many very wealthy New Yorkers. On the other, staunch abolitionists thought that Seward was backtracking from his former anti-slavery stand, to a position closer to Lincoln's, whereby saving the Union took precedence over everything.

Romero, in any case, had legitimate business in New York City, trying to procure arms and money for his countrymen. He would simply have to find ways to beat the French at their own game, even if it did contravene U.S. neutrality. Even amidst the Civil War and the French Intervention, businessmen were proposing commercial deals for railroads and the exploitation of natural resources that merited the attention of the Mexican Chargé. In fairness, Romero did not actively seek out Seward's adversaries in New York; they found him. As noted earlier, Romero learned almost immediately that Mexico's future would be linked to American money, and, if public sources were difficult to obtain in Washington, private sources might be more forthcoming in New York City. There was also a lot of unofficial political activity in New York, and Romero encountered there political activists from other Central American countries who underscored the importance of Mexico

[41] Van Deusen, *Thurlow Weed*, p. 109.

[42] Passed in 1883 and named for its sponsor, Sen. George Pendleton D-OH, it sought to limit the political "spoils system" by making certain federal positions open only through examination. It was popularly called the "merit system" to distinguish it from using political appointments as paybacks, as Seward, and especially Weed, had done throughout their careers.

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remaining a republic if democracy was to flourish elsewhere in Spanish-speaking America.[43] Finally, it would be necessary to spend a fair amount of time in New York City once Juárez sent his family there for security reasons in August 1864.[44]

The locus of much of Romero's activity was one of the city's finest restaurants, Delmonico's on Fifth Avenue. There he often met with his New York friends and colleagues, such as Robert McLane, the former U.S. Minister to Mexico, and Edward L. Plumb, who had also worked for the U.S. State Dept. in Mexico and Washington.[45] It was at Delmonico's in June of 1862 that Spanish General Prim publicly denounced French actions in Mexico. This made the headlines, because Prim had been the commander of the Spanish forces authorized by the Convention of London. He headed the Spanish third of the debt collecting mission and left Mexico almost immediately when he saw what the French really intended. Now married to a young Mexican woman, Prim was publicly espousing the cause of Mexican liberalism. When Prim later met with Seward in Washington, Romero acted as the interpreter.

Progressively, Romero found his greatest support among New York City's most prominent businessmen. James Beekman, from one of the oldest families of New York of Dutch descent, became his closest confidant. Through Beekman, Romero met Hiram Barney, administrator of the Port of New York, and as such, the source of a wealth of information about shipments to Mexico. Beekman exercised his influence over wealthy members of the New York Republican Party through the Union League Club. Beekman was no friend of Seward or Thurlow Weed, and he was more than willing to help Romero

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[43] Romero's acquaintances included Jose Antonio de Irisarri, a prominent Guatemalan thinker who emphasized Mexico's regional importance to Romero. He also frequented Thomas Mosquera, former president of Colombia, who offered military aid to Juárez, which he probably could not deliver. Bernstein, *Romero*, pp. 82-3.

[44] Cadenhead, *Juárez*, p. 99; some of Juárez's deepest thoughts were revealed in letters to his son-in-law Pedro Santacilia who accompanied Juárez's wife, Dona Margarita, to New York. Romero kept close watch on the family and did everything in his power to assure their welfare.

[45] Prof. Schoonover speculates that Plumb, along with Robert Chew and Henry Roy de la Reintrie were his confidential sources within the State Department, Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 13. When the French Intervention was over, Plumb would become very involved in investment schemes in Mexico, see Pletcher, *Rails*, Ch. 1 and especially Ch. 2.

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organize a public relations campaign to seek a more active role for the U.S. in opposing French aggression in Mexico. Beekman introduced Romero to William H. Aspinwall, head of the Panama railway; banker William Dodge, one of the wealthiest people in New York; and Generals George B. McLellan and John A. Dix.[46] All of these individuals were in a position to help Mexico, either by providing arms and money, or by favorably influencing public opinion. The guest lists for a series of dinners given at Delmonico's and other places around New York City give some indication of the degree to which Romero had penetrated the upper reaches of New York City society and finance.[47]

By 1864, Romero was in a position to accomplish something tangible for Mexico. He had powerful friends in New York and had cultivated influential members of Congress. His government had promoted him, and he now had sufficient rank to be taken seriously by those who considered such things important. He had some money to work with, and his banker friends in New York were showing him how private loans might work if the U.S. government persisted in denying Mexico official assistance, although they had yet to transfer any real cash.

Romero needed to be in a position to act, because in the spring of 1864, the French Intervention was about to become permanent in the form of Emperor Maximilian. When offered the crown by Mexican Conservatives, Maximilian agreed on the condition that a plebiscite be held, confirming his approval by the Mexican populace, an ironic gesture towards democratic procedure by someone about to become emperor, but

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[46] McClellan was the Democratic presidential candidate in 1864, Dix replaced John Bigelow as Minister to France in December, 1866, Bigelow, *Retrospections, vol. III,* p. 656.

[47] Robert Miller, "Matías Romero: Mexican Minister to the United States during the Juárez-Maximilian Era," *Hispanic American Historical Review,* vol. XLV, May, 1965 #2, p. 233. Guests included: William Cullen Bryant, poet and editor of the New York *Evening Post*, John W. Hammersley, prominent New York City lawyer, William H. Aspinwall, promoter of the Panama railroad, George Bancroft, historian, along with the President of Columbia University, and the mayor of New York. There was a similarly distinguished guest list for Romero's farewell dinner at Delmonico's in 1867, as recounted in J. K. Wilkerson, *Matías Romero,* 1867, Mexico City: U.S. Embassy, 1988. Seward did not attend this banquet in person, but sent a message describing Romero as a "highly respected and esteemed friend," who was blessed with "ability, fidelity, frankness, and courtesy." Seward might not have been quite as willing to be so laudatory of Romero between 1862 and 1866.

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indicative of Maximilian's contradictory nature. Mexico had no experience with such a political process, but the French military contrived something acceptable under the circumstances, which the naïve Maximilian accepted as popular endorsement.[48] Once the plebiscite demanded by Maximilian was complete, and the terms of his responsibilities to Napoleon III were spelled out in the convention of Miramar (named after Maximilian's castle near Trieste) [Appendix IV], the way was clear for departure for Mexico.

Indeed, this call for a plebiscite can be viewed as emblematic of Maximilian's ineptitude and his total lack of comprehension of the situation on the ground in the country he was about to rule. Since independence in 1821, and indeed for the eleven years before that, political power in Mexico had been determined by force. In fact, as Maximilian was calling for the plebiscite, political power was once again changing by force, thanks to the presence of French troops. Only force could keep Maximilian in power once he arrived. Conversely, the force of the Juáristas led to his execution. The plebiscite was a polite fiction for a European prince who was unnerved by the sight of blood. It was one of the many fraudulent premises on which Maximilian based his regime, another being the complete support of the Catholic Church; a regime erected on such a flimsy foundation was doomed. Seward had an overall strategy for getting the French out of Mexico that called for diplomacy and subtle military threats. From June 1864 onward, the presence of the incompetent Maximilian on the Mexican throne would add greatly to the chances of that strategy's success.

Other principal provisions of the Treaty, signed on April 10, 1864, called for Maximilian to pay for the French troops, twenty thousand who were to remain in Mexico until 1867. Maximilian was also to pay all of the claims that precipitated European intervention in the first place. He also agreed to pay the French loans that Juárez had refused to pay on the basis that such loans were illegal and not binding on Mexico.

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[48] Cunningham, *Mexico and the Foreign Policy of Napoleon III,* pp. 174-76; see also Jasper Ridley, *Maximilian and Juárez*, NY: Ticknor & Fields, 1992, pp. 156-7.

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Wittingly or unwittingly, Maximilian thus tripled Mexico's foreign debt before ever setting foot in the country. Given his other egregious misjudgments, one would have to assume that Maximilian did so "unwittingly," overlooking the crucial element that he would be beholden to France for a very long time, even if his enterprise succeeded. Indeed, two years later, Napoleon III used Maximilian's inability to live up to the financial terms of the Miramar Treaty as his ostensible reason for removing French troops.[49]

Maximilian, his Belgian princess wife Charlotte, and their entourage left Trieste in April and arrived in Veracruz on May 28, 1864. Once Juárez fled north, the French established a caretaker government. The extinction of Mexican republican and democratic principles seemed imminent when Maximilian triumphantly entered Mexico City on June 12, 1864. Meanwhile, Juárez was still trying to hold his forces together while moving from San Luis Potosi, to Saltillo, to Monterrey, and finally to Chihuahua [see map p. iii]. Before reaching Chihuahua, the Juárez government was physically situated on horseback and in carriages.[50] Even once in Chihuahua Juárez was forced to flee twice to Paso del Norte (now eponymously called Ciudad Juárez) on the U.S. border across from El Paso, Texas.

Since its expulsion from Mexico City, the Juárez government had sent its official foreign correspondence from the ambulatory regime by ship through Guaymas on the Gulf of California. Once Maximilian's forces took Guayamas, official correspondence had to travel through Texas in the Confederacy, to Santa Fe, to Kansas City, then onto Washington. The overland process took six weeks and was quite unreliable. As a result of this, Romero was often operating without any direct instructions at all from his government during this period. Yet during all this time only once was he reprimanded. That reprimand related to Romero's next big diplomatic problem.

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[49] Hannah, *Napoleon III*, p. 126-7.
[50] Cadenhead, *Benito Juárez*, pp. 99-101; Knapp, *Life of Sebastián*, ch. VII.

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Maximilian and the French were pushing hard for official recognition of Maximilian's regime as the true government of Mexico. On the surface their arguments were relatively persuasive. The U.S. had traditionally recognized governments that controlled capitals, and Maximilian was firmly entrenched in the Mexican capital of Mexico City. Given that Juárez was running for his life in Mexico's northern deserts, it was hard to make a case for the legitimacy of the Juárez government. As might logically be expected, European monarchies had recognized fellow monarch Maximilian right away. The matter was being discussed openly in Congress and the press, even though Lincoln and Seward stuck adamantly to Juárez. This of course meant that the U.S. Minister to Mexico, Corwin, no longer had a government to negotiate with, as he chose not to flee with the Juárez government to San Luis Potosi. Given his embarrassing situation, Corwin requested that he be permitted to return to the U.S., which was approved.[51] By this time Romero suspected that Corwin had developed pro-Maximilian sympathies, something rumored, but never proven. By November 1864, Seward had received a request from Maximilian requesting recognition, but the request had not been acted upon.

The whole issue of recognition was always central to the unfolding drama between the U.S., France and Mexico. Early in the Civil War, Seward had instructed Minister Dayton in Paris to adopt a conciliatory tone towards France, as he did not want to goad it into recognizing the Confederacy. For his part, Napoleon III expected an independent Confederacy to recognize whatever puppet regime he might establish in Mexico. Now the most important part of Napoleon's plan had come to fruition with the installation of Maximilian and his recognition by most European states. If the Union recognized Maximilian, his claim to legitimacy would be validated. More importantly, recognition would effectively repudiate the Juárez government. This would have had

[51] William H. Corwin to Seward re departure of Thomas Corwin, 6/30/1864, DR, Despatches, Mexico, M97, R31

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grave consequences for Romero, who was desperately trying to float loans and buy arms for Juárez. Whatever credit on the financial markets the Juárez regime might still have would be effectively negated by the recognition of Maximilian.

Seward had already given an indication of his position in his instructions to Minister Dayton in Paris, concerning Maximilian's visit there in February 1864:

> If the Archduke Maximilian appears in Paris only in his character as an imperial prince of the house of Hapsburg, you will be expected to be neither demonstrative nor reserved in your deportment towards him. If he appears there with any assumption of political authority or title in Mexico, you will entirely refrain from intercourse with him.[52]

From Spain, U.S. Minister Gustav Koerner likewise asked how Maximilian's emissaries should be treated. Seward told Koerner to "hold no official intercourse with any representative at Madrid or any revolutionary government that has been or shall be established against the authority of the United States in Mexico."[53]

But Napoleon III was persistent, as was his protégé. Maximilian tried to increase his chances for recognition by sending two emissaries to the U.S., Miguel Arroyo and Mariano Degollado. The former was Maximilian's Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs; the latter had served as one of Santa Anna's diplomats in Washington. They had a number of influential friends and funds at their disposal to influence public opinion. Seward would have none of it and never did meet, formally or informally, with Maximilian's two envoys.[54]

There was an anomaly in U.S. law at the time that did not require *exequatur* for consuls.[55] Hence Arroyo set up an office on Broadway and announced that he was the

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[52] Seward to Dayton, Feb. 27, 1864, DR, Instructions, France, M77, R57.
[53] Seward to Koerner, April 7, 1864, DR, Instructions, Spain, M77, R 143.
[54] Robert W. Frazer, *Matías Romero and the French Intervention in Mexico*, Ph .D. dissertation, Los Angeles: UCLA, 1941, pp 435-440.
[55] *Exequatur*: written recognition of a consul by the government or state in which he is stationed, authorizing him to exercise his powers

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official commercial agent for Maximilian, a function formerly performed by the French consul. In essence, Arroyo was establishing a "front" from which efforts for Maximilian's recognition could be mounted. Romero protested to Seward, but Seward said that there was nothing illegal in such an arrangement under U.S. law. Arroyo and Degollado mounted a rather vigorous campaign on behalf of Maximilian, but it came to nothing.[56]

However, Romero was not privy to all of the intelligence available to Seward, and he remained very nervous that the U.S. would recognize Maximilian. This fear led him to the only serious gaffe of his diplomatic tenure in Washington. Romero floated a proposal to Seward that the Mexican states of Baja California and Sonora might be up for sale if recognition of Maximilian were definitively denied, thereby using the only real collateral Mexico had. He did not initiate this overture on his own, but in tandem with Juárista General Manuel Doblado, who happened to be in the U.S. soliciting guns and money.[57] When apprised of these overtures, Juárez sternly reminded both men that their diplomatic latitude did not extend to jeopardizing the "integrity and independence of the national territory."[58] Despite Romero's fears, Seward remained good to his word and Maximilian remained unrecognized.

By 1864, Congress was focusing more on Mexican affairs. Although Seward had avoided overt mention of the Monroe Doctrine, several members of the House and Senate called the French intervention in Mexico a clear violation of that policy. These included California Senator James MacDougall, and Representatives John Kasson of Iowa and Henry Winter Davis of Maryland, the latter Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. A House resolution on April 4, 1864 stated that the U.S. "will never consent to the erection of a monarchical government under European influence upon the ruins of

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[56] Frazer, *Romero and French Intervention*, p. 439-40.
[57] This is the same Manuel Doblado who negotiated the Convention of Soledad with the Tripartite Governments reaffirming non-involvement in Mexican internal political affairs during the debt-collecting mission.
[58] Cadenhead, *Juárez*, p. 104.

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an American republic."[59] When apprised of this resolution, French Foreign Minister Drouyn de Lhuys reportedly asked U.S. Minister Dayton, "Do you bring us peace or bring us war?"[60] Romero was further reassured by Lincoln's message to Congress on December 6, 1864. This was the first time the President had directly mentioned Mexico in his annual message, and he said simply:

> Mexico continues to be a theater of civil war. While our political relations with that country have undergone no change, we have at the same time strictly maintained neutrality between the belligerents.[61]

This formulation indicated that the struggle was no longer between France and Mexico, but between warring factions in Mexico, and the U.S. had already officially recognized one of those factions as legitimate, even while maintaining a public posture of neutrality. Disapproving of Seward's temporizing with the French, Congress used the "power of the purse." The House Appropriation bill of December 15 provided funding for a diplomatic presence only in the *Republic* of Mexico. There would be no funds for a legation to Maximilian's *Empire*.

After what must have seemed to Romero like an eternity, events were now tending in his direction. Congress was on his side, as was public opinion. The U.S. press had entered the fray on the Mexican issue, in general coming down squarely on the side of Juárez's Liberals. This was proving to be a political liability for Lincoln and Seward in an election year. Romero himself liberally provided notes and background information to editors who showed a friendly disposition to the Liberal regime. A "Defenders of the Monroe Doctrine" Club was formed in New Orleans in late 1864. The club sponsored essay contests, and published and distributed those that won. The club caused enough trouble for the French Chargé to protest to Seward about its actions.[62]

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[59] *Congressional Globe*, April 4, 1864, 38th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 1408.
[60] Van Deusen, *Seward*, p. 368.
[61] J.D. Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897*, vol. V, New York: Bureau of National Literature, 1897, p. 3444.
[62] Perkins, *Monroe Doctrine*, 1933 ed., pp. 448-9.

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Without U.S. recognition, Maximilian was now viewed as a "revolutionary." The domestic political situation in France was festering, and Prussia was menacing its borders. An uprising in Poland against Russian rule threatened the European balance of power. Russia had been the sole European power to show overt sympathy for the Union. Historian D.P. Crook notes that "bungling European policy might bring together the beleaguered colossi of east [Russia] and west [the U.S.], allowing them to achieve the primacy on the world stage to which their resources entitled them."[63] Michele Cunningham cites similar instances of political upheaval in Europe, including trouble in the Danish duchies of Schleswig-Holstein, as the reason "many historians have claimed that it was the turn of events in Europe during 1863, most notably the uprisings in Poland and later the conflict over the Danish duchies, that forced Napoleon to begin reducing France's involvement in Mexico."[64] She maintains, however, that these European developments were not decisive, because "Napoleon never intended that France should have a lengthy involvement in Mexico."[65] Whether Cunningham is correct or not, it cannot be denied that a great deal was going on in Europe that had implications for France, its military and its treasury. Napoleon III was going to have to think hard about the allocation of his resources.

The elevation of U.S. Grant as Lieutenant General of the Union Army in the spring of 1864 provided an additional boost for Romero.[66] Grant was Romero's highest-ranking confidant and a strong public supporter of the Mexican Liberals. Romero was now convinced that republican Mexico would prevail. Romero was beginning to believe

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[63] D.P. Crook, *Diplomacy During the American Civil War,* NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1975, pp. 122.
[64] Cunningham, *Mexico,* p. 155.
[65] Ibid., p. 155.
[66] This rank had only been held previously by George Washington. Lincoln added "General in Chief" to the title, McPherson, *Battle Cry,* p. 718

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that it was only a matter of time. Seward also had hopes for republican Mexico's long-term future, but in the short run found himself beleaguered by internal critics and political intrigues.

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CHAPTER THREE

PARTISANSHIP IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Diplomats do not work in a political vacuum and William Henry Seward was no exception. Whereas Seward's handling of external threats to the Union was the subject of preceding chapters, this chapter will analyze how Seward managed to resist forces *within* the U.S. government that opposed him personally and his handling of foreign policy in general. One group wanted his ouster, as much for reasons of personal jealousy as for policy. The other wanted a more aggressive approach to removing the French from Mexico. The fact that the former group was largely composed of colleagues with whom he had fought tough battles in the U.S. Senate broke his heart and effectively ended his presidential aspirations. The latter group gained adherents as it became clearer that the Union would win and that the military resources at the Union's disposal could easily be put to use against the French. This group wanted a public reaffirmation that the Monroe Doctrine was national policy, and that no new European-inspired monarchies would be allowed in the Western Hemisphere.

Among Senators, an irony surrounds the role played during the French intervention by Senator Charles Sumner, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Sumner was one of Seward's greatest rivals and persistent behind-the-scenes critics, yet he ended up actually supporting Seward's Mexican policy by his repeated tabling of Senate resolutions calling for more aggressive action against the French. Meanwhile, Mexican Minister to Washington Matias Romero reappeared, trying ceaselessly to get U.S. Congressmen to support his call for U.S. armed intervention in Mexico to dislodge the French.

Seward endured much in the four years between Lincoln's inauguration and the physical attacks on April 14, 1865 that left him scarred and the president dead. He experienced the betrayal of his former colleagues in the Senate and his co-workers in the

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cabinet. He was attacked in the press for Union military failures that were not specifically of his making. His manhood and patriotism were called into question on the Senate floor. In confronting the growing criticism of his policy of neutrality towards the French in Mexico, he felt profoundly misunderstood by the general public and the radical members of his own political party. Yet Seward was nothing if not persistent and lucky, an invaluable asset in politics. In spite of all the obstacles, both public and personal, he ended up prevailing over his political foes.

Almost immediately after President Lincoln's inauguration, dissatisfaction with Seward had begun to grow in Congress and within the Cabinet, some of it for good reason. Sumner, perhaps the government's greatest expert on foreign affairs *after* Seward and the Minister to Great Britain, Charles Francis Adams, had been working to undermine Seward from the beginning of the Lincoln Administration. Seward and Sumner had been friends in the Senate and likeminded combatants in the struggle against the extension of slavery in the 1840s and 1850s. However, Sumner's personal jealousy of Seward's prominence in the Lincoln administration, along with his growing differences over foreign and domestic policy, caused a rift between the two that rapidly widened.

For his policy to succeed, Seward would have to find a way to resist growing calls for action from Congressmen who were touchy about their prerogatives in foreign affairs, and those who were beginning to view Seward's refusal to act aggressively in Mexico as synonymous with cowardice. By early 1863, Democratic Senator James A. McDougall of California was taking Seward's Mexican policy to task on the floor of the Senate on the grounds that it was pusillanimous. Fending off both the general dissatisfaction and specific criticisms of his former friends and colleagues in Congress would occupy much of Seward's time from late 1862 to 1865.

Upon assuming his position as Secretary of State in March 1861, Seward left the Senate. Had he remained, he would have continued to collaborate with Sumner and Senators like Henry Wilson from Massachusetts, Benjamin Wade of Ohio, Zachariah

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Chandler of Michigan, and Lyman Trumbull of Illinois. Having served as U.S. Senator from New York since 1849, Seward, unlike Lincoln, was a known quantity to these men. With the nation's largest number of electoral votes (thirty-five in 1860), New York had always been central to U.S. politics. Lincoln, coming from Illinois with its eleven electoral votes, was somewhat of a cipher to the national leadership in 1861, having served only one term as a Whig congressman from 1847 to 1849. His fellow congressmen considered Seward an abolitionist and were familiar with many of his classic anti-slavery speeches. Seward was anathema to pro-slavery southerners. Indeed, in his first major address to the Senate, known as his "higher law" speech, he argued forcefully that California should be admitted as a free state:

> The Constitution regulates our stewardship; the Constitution devotes the domain to union, to justice, to defense, to welfare, and to liberty. But there is a higher law than the Constitution, which regulates our authority over the domain, and devotes it to the same noble purposes.[1]

This controversial appeal to a "higher law" interjected an element of moral imperative into the debate over slavery in the territories, one consistent with the abolitionist position that slavery was sinful and therefore must be ended immediately, thereby precluding any bargaining about it. Conversely, it infuriated those, particularly in the South, who felt that in political matters there was no "higher law" than the Constitution.

Seward's 1858 "irrepressible conflict" speech, in which he spoke of the impending "collision" between economic systems dependent on either slave or free labor, elaborated on this theme:

> Shall I tell you what this collision means? They who think that it is accidental, unnecessary, the work of interested or fanatical agitators . . .miss the case altogether. It is an irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces,

[1] Seward speech in the U.S. Senate, 3/11/1850, cited in Glyndon Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward*, NY: Oxford U. Press, 1967, p. 123; see also "Great Union Names: William Henry Seward," *Union College Magazine*, vol. 94, #1, summer 2001.

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> and it means that the United States must and will, sooner or later, become either entirely a slaveholding nation, or entirely a free labor nation.[2]

These words are congruent with those of Lincoln in his famous "house divided" speech, also delivered in 1858, in which he said "I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free."[3] From these and other public utterances, it would appear that, at least at the time of the election in 1860, Lincoln and Seward were in accord with those in Congress who, because of their inflexible pro-abolition stance, would come to be known as Radical Republicans.

John Bigelow had known Seward well since 1856, and had served as U.S. Consul, then Minister, to France during the period when French withdrawal from Mexico was actually being negotiated. A writer, Edward Pierce, had written to Bigelow in 1892 asking his impressions of Seward. Bigelow replied in length, putting Seward's achievements in the political context of their time, explaining to Pierce why they were so extraordinary under the circumstances:

> He was the first antislavery man in the country who had and retained a national party behind him. If he did not march as fast as some, he always kept ahead of his troops, but never so far that they could not hear his word of command. There were many earnest and able antislavery men in the Senate while he was Senator, but Seward was the one who was usually held responsible by the slaveholders for all the antislavery agitation, and it was against him that their guns were always turned in controversy. This was an unconscious homage to his sagacity as a leader of the phalanx of freedom, which was paid to no other Northern Senator.[4]

In one sense, the rift that proceeded to develop between Lincoln and Seward, and the Radical Republicans, was one of timing. Once it was clear that the Union would not

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[2] George E. Baker, ed., *The Works of William H. Seward, V vols.*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1888, vol. 4, pp. 56 & 292.
[3] Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols., New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers U. Press, 1952-55, vol. II, pp. 465-66.
[4] Bigelow, *Retrospections, vol. 3*, pp. 627-8.

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win the Civil War quickly, Lincoln and Seward entertained various ideas about temporizing over slavery in order to save the Union. This approach was perhaps best summarized in Lincoln's famous reply to Horace Greeley's "The Prayer of Twenty Millions," a pro-emancipation editorial appearing on August 20, 1862 in Greeley's paper the New York *Tribune*:

> My paramount object in the struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that.[5]

This approach, shared by Seward, was anathema to the Radicals, who wanted not only immediate emancipation, but also citizenship and the vote for freedmen.

Based on his senatorial experience and public utterances, Seward should have been able to work with the Radicals even while his position in the administration became progressively more moderate. Once on board, however, and once Lincoln made clear to him after the April Fool's memorandum that he, the President, was in Chargé, Seward hove to the moderate line. That policy, with its emphasis on saving the union at any cost, up to and including bargaining over slavery, estranged Seward from his former Radical colleagues. They viewed this shift as tantamount to betrayal, and their disaffection with Seward began shortly after he showed that he would follow the President's lead.

There was also congressional disagreement over foreign policy. Sumner particularly disapproved of what he viewed as Seward's saber rattling with England and France over their recognition of the Confederacy's "belligerent" status. Shortly after the European pronouncements, Seward drafted a message to Minister Adams in London that threatened war "between the European and the American branches of the British race" if several provisions were not met. Referred to subsequently as "Despatch No. 10," it was supposed to be delivered directly to the British Government and called for the British to

[5] Basler., *Collected Works, vol. V*, 388-89.

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do a number of things. Initially, Britain was to adhere to the Union naval blockade of southern ports, British privateers were to be treated as pirates, and the British had to agree not to deal in any way with representatives of the Confederacy.[6] Lincoln showed this draft to Sumner, who was appalled at its high-handedness, and both men edited the message to tone it down. Adams was instructed not to read the message *verbatim* but simply to make British Foreign Minister John Russell aware of its contents.[7] Adams biographer Martin Duberman states that "Adams could hardly believe the dispatch when he received it."[8] Charles Francis Adams, Jr., in his biography of his father, hypothesizes that:

> It is not difficult to imagine what would have been the effect of a dispatch couched in these terms delivered in June, 1861, to a British government of which Lord Palmerston was the head, with England then acting in full understanding with France. The Confederacy would have been recognized, and the blockade of its coast, at that time hardly more than nominal, would have been disallowed almost before the American minister had rattled out of Downing Street.[9]

Seward had also been overheard at a number of social engagements taking a very bellicose tone towards Britain. It is well documented that Seward loved dinner parties, fine wines, brandy and cigars. On these occasions he could be garrulous, and maybe let slip things in conversation that he thought were confidential, but these things were repeated nevertheless, perhaps out of context. This is almost certainly what happened in the case of his offhand comment to the Duke of Newcastle in November 1860 during dinner that he "would have to insult Great Britain when he became President or Secretary of State." The Duke made much of it and reported it to Prime Minister Palmerston and

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[6] Seward to Adams, May 21, 1861, #10, DR, Instructions, Great Britain, M77, R76, pp 406-13; see also Burton J. Hendrick, *Lincoln's War Cabinet,* Boston: Little, Brown, 1946, pp. 193-98: John Taylor, *William Henry Seward,* p. 179-80.
[7] Donald, *Sumner*, pp. 20-1.
[8] Martin B. Duberman, *Charles Francis Adams, 1807-1886*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1961, p. 268.
[9] Charles Francis Adams, Jr., *Charles Francis Adams*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1900, p. 193.

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Foreign Minister Russell. Seward himself disavowed the statement and Thurlow Weed, who was present, dismissed it as "an attempted pleasantry."[10] The remark was reported in the British press and gave Seward a reputation in England for being a loose cannon.

Regardless of the circumstances, Sumner, who had heard about these occasions from some of his many close British correspondents, disapproved of such offhand comments from someone who was in a position to become Secretary of State in the Lincoln administration. Seward's truculence may have been "reckless" as Sumner alleged, or calculated to give the English second thoughts about just how far they could go in exploiting the situation in North America. Sumner's biographer David Donald writes:

> It seems never to have occurred to Sumner that Seward might not be crazy but cunning. The Secretary's irritable jingoism was carefully calculated, so that the British and French would do nothing that might upset such a seemingly volatile official.[11]

Donald's assessment of Seward's approach remains rather convincing. There was "method in his madness," although such an unorthodox approach to diplomacy would likely only been shared with his son Frederick. After all, Seward had vastly wider international experience than all but Sumner, Henry Sanford, and Charles Francis Adams among his political counterparts. He had met Queen Victoria, Lords Palmerston and Russell, Gladstone and Nassau Senior in May 1859. He had formed an opinion of them and may have calculated that a certain amount of saber rattling would cause them to back off or at least think twice.[12] Whatever his motivation, the strategy worked on one level in the case of the Confederate representatives in London, who were no longer given official access to the Palmerston government.[13]

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[10] Van Deusen, *Seward*, p. 260.
[11] Donald, *Sumner*, pp. 22-23.
[12] Van Deusen, *Seward*, pp. 211-12; Taylor, *William Henry Seward*, p. 113.
[13] The shipping issues proved considerably thornier. Indeed, claims concerning the depredations caused by the Confederate steamers *Florida* and *Alabama* were not resolved between the U.S. and Great Britain until

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However, any apparent loss of mental poise for the Lincoln administration's second most powerful official certainly had an unsettling effect on Seward's colleagues in the cabinet and Congress. It is hard to know whether this episode is proof of Seward's intelligence. He would do something similar in 1866 regarding Napoleon III's decision to change the timetable for French troop withdrawal. In both cases, he created a brief diplomatic firestorm that gave his opponents pause, and enabled him to buy a little time while his adversaries pondered the unanticipated consequences of challenging the U.S. Secretary of State. In both cases, he achieved the result he sought.

Seward was very intelligent, but he was neither a saint nor infallible. He made many mistakes early in the Lincoln Administration, some of which have been detailed here. He may have wanted to appear bellicose on purpose in the case of Great Britain. As Donald speculates, it might have been advantageous for Seward to be perceived as an "unpredictable" Secretary of State. However, he was not hypocritical and definitely not self-serving. He was loyal to a fault, and he accepted his subordinate position to Lincoln with nary a complaint once he accepted Lincoln's response to his ill-advised April Fool's memo. Unlike Chase, Seward did not use his position in the cabinet to further any presidential ambitions for 1864. He was never accused by anyone of taking advantage of his political position, or of not being totally devoted to duty. Before the term was coined, he was a workaholic.

Were meddling, a general highhandedness in tone, and a bureaucratic oversight enough to call for the dismissal of so central an official at such an important time? It would seem not, but Radicals in the Senate were still upset enough to call for the resignation of Lincoln's most important adviser at one of the darkest hours of the war. Jefferson Davis would have certainly welcomed news of chaos in the cabinet so soon after Fredericksburg.

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well after the Civil War, see Martin Duberman, *Charles Francis Adams, 1807-1886,* Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961, Ch. 24.

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It can be argued that Seward inadvertently made people jealous. That sentiment comes through in the way Welles characterizes him in his *Diary*. He was very close with the President, and the President often walked across Lafayette Park in the evenings to visit Seward, not vice-versa. Sumner and Chase took exception to this closeness and perhaps resented the fact that Seward did nothing to hide it. Lincoln found him totally reliable, as did Andrew Johnson later, something that could not be said for Chase or the Radicals in Congress.[14]

Another explanation for contradictory views of Seward may be found in the old maxim used by President Kennedy, after the Bay of Pigs fiasco, to the effect that victory has a thousand fathers but defeat is an orphan. In late 1862, Radicals simply could not accept that the Union was losing, and they were casting about for scapegoats. Militarily it meant George B. McClellan, and politically the logical villain was Seward, who had functioned as Lincoln's most important cabinet officer for the first year and a half of the war. Whatever the complex reasons for senatorial dissatisfaction with Seward, such an outright rift at the highest level of the Republican leadership left animosities that in some cases never healed.

A related question is why the animosity was directed at Seward and not Lincoln. In the 1870s, Welles and Charles Francis Adams were to fiercely debate the relative merits of the President and the Secretary of State.[15] But at the beginning of 1863, Lincoln was more disdained than hated. Lincoln was characterized by Orestes Brownson, one of Sumner's correspondents, as "thick-headed" and "obstinate as a mule" rather than malicious and devious like Seward.[16] Disappointment and disillusionment with, as opposed to hatred for, the President surfaced in several of Horace Greeley's editorials for the New York *Tribune*. Greeley was a close friend of Sumner, and the

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[14] Hans Trefousse, *Andrew Johnson: A Biography*, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1989, p. 270.
[15] Gideon Welles, *Lincoln and Seward: Remarks upon the Memorial Address of Chas. Francis Adams, on the Late Wm. H. Seward*, Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1969, originally published in 1874.
[16] Donald, *Sumner*, p. 89.

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Tribune shared the viewpoint of Radical Republicans. There was, of course, irony in this disillusionment, as Lincoln had succeeded as the Republican nominee in Chicago in large part because Greeley had vigorously opposed Seward.[17]

However, wanting Seward out did not mean wanting Lincoln in, and Greeley had but lukewarm enthusiasm for Lincoln once it was shown that his own choice, Old Whig Edward Bates of Missouri, could not win. After the inauguration, Greeley's tepid support of Lincoln turned sour due primarily to Union defeats on the battlefield and the soaring costs of the war. Historian Glyndon Van Deusen noted that Greeley was convinced of Lincoln's "incompetence" and felt the country, in need of a heroic leader, was instead saddled "with such a mediocrity at such a critical time."[18] Yet Greeley and the Radicals shared a respect for the office of the Presidency and recognized that Lincoln had been elected for four years. Despite what some viewed as his somewhat "uncouth" manners, Lincoln was eminently likeable. His alleged "incompetence," though lamentable under the circumstances, did not engender personal hatred from Republicans. That was not the case with Seward; the venom directed toward him was visceral, *ad hominem,* and organized.

It was amidst all these strained political and personal relations that public sniping on the Seward Mexican policy began. No sooner had the cabinet crisis passed at the end of 1862, than Democratic Senator James McDougall of California took Seward to task. In a long speech on February 3, 1863, the senator stated that U.S. policy toward French "interference" in Mexico was nothing less than cowardly and that French avowals of innocent intentions there were worthless. In proposing resolutions to the Senate, he minced no words:

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[17] Glyndon Van Deusen, *Horace Greeley: Nineteenth Century Crusader,* Philadelphia: U. Pennsylvania Press, 1953, pp. 245-48. Greeley, Seward and Thurlow Weed had originally worked together advancing issues of mutual importance in New York. According to Seward and Weed, Greeley had asked Seward for a political favor that was denied. His animosity reportedly stemmed from that rejection, and he opposed both his former colleagues henceforth.

[18] Ibid., p. 282.

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> I have affirmed in these resolutions [which McDougall was proposing to the Senate] that the movement of France against Mexico is in violation of the known and recognized rules of international law, in violation of the treaty made at London between England, Spain, and France, in violation of repeated assurances given by France to this Government; I now further affirm . . .that both the treaty and the assurances of which I speak were made on the part of France with the definite purpose of misleading and deceiving this Government; that they were designed as a fraud upon us, and, that we have been misled, deceived, and defrauded to the very point of jeopardy by the Machiavelli who is now Emperor of the French. [19]

McDougall then went on to cite as one of the proofs for his assertion a translated section of the Napoleon III letter to Forey, which had been published in the morning newspapers.[20] He called the French "interference" the "most flagrant robber outrage that has been attempted by any modern civilized State; an outrage that demands our interference." McDougall asserted that the plan to put Maximilian on the throne had long been in the works and was essentially a European monarchical scheme that totally disregarded the welfare of Mexico. He then stated that war with France was not out of the question, and that the U.S. Minister in France and the Secretary of State had been duped: "We can anticipate nothing less than war . . . I insist that she [France] is waging substantive war upon us now." He then went into a long description of how vulnerable California would be to French attack.

In the same speech, McDougall introduced the idea that the French "interference" violated the Monroe Doctrine. Seward had avoided referring to the doctrine in his correspondence and public pronouncements, but McDougall stated that the forty-year old policy was more valid than ever:

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[19] Speech of Hon J.A. McDougall of California, in the Senate of the United States, February 3, 1863, *Appendix to the Congressional Globe*, 37th Congress, 3rd Session, pp. *94-100.*
[20] See Ch. 1, p. 53, note #54.

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> If the rule laid down by Mr. Monroe in his messages of December 1823 and 1824 is a wise and just consideration both of our rights and interests, it follows by a much stronger reason that the duty is now devolved upon this Government to protest against and, if necessary, to resist by force of arms the extension of the power and policies of France, with the monarchical institutions of Europe, over the neighboring republic of Mexico.

McDougall continued that "if the Monroe doctrine had been firmly asserted in the fall of 1861, there would be no French troops now in Mexico and no danger of a French invasion of our own territories."

His criticism then became *ad hominem* as he turned on Seward who, according to McDougall, had been deceived by the blandishments of Napoleon III. He likewise condemned Senator Sumner, who, as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, had not let the McDougall resolutions (numbers 13 and 36) come up for a vote. He said that Seward was patterning himself after the cunning French diplomat Talleyrand and admired "that skill by which words may be used to conceal our thoughts, and that, in a too great effort to imitate his example [Talleyrand's], he has failed to say anything; therefore, perchance, nothing has been said." McDougall wondered out loud if the Secretary and the Chairman "are not smitten with judicial blindness; if they can observe anything of the public movements of the day, they cannot fail to see that equally with the leaders of the rebellion in the South, the Emperor of France is our determined and dangerous enemy."

As a senator from the only Union State then bordering on Mexico, McDougall had cause for concern, even if his fears of French land and sea invasion of California bordered on lunacy. As mentioned earlier, Romero deduced rather quickly that he needed allies in the legislative branch to implement his plans for aiding Mexico. He had found in McDougall someone willing to publicly champion republican Mexico's cause and to

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confront Seward and thus liberally aided the senator with background information.[21] Seward's policy was simply too dilatory in their estimation. The result was this speech, the first major assault by an elected official on Seward's cautious policy that emphasized words over actions.

As stated, Sumner had indeed kept the two resolutions that accompanied McDougall's speech bottled up in committee.[22] This was not as a favor to Seward, whom he continued to dislike and distrust, but out of sensitivity to republican Mexico's fate. Sumner, like other Radicals, felt that the Juárez's regime, with all its flaws, was infinitely preferable to a monarch in Mexico installed and maintained by France. In this particular case, however, he agreed with Seward's assessment that, in early 1863, the time was not right for needlessly alienating France. This apparent contradiction is explained by the fact that Union military fortunes at this juncture were such that U.S. threats could not have been backed up. Threatening France when the Union could not even subdue Robert E. Lee was pointless, and both Sumner and Seward knew it. Undeterred, Romero sought out other legislators to introduce similar resolutions condemning the French.

By January 1864, Romero had an ally in the House, John Kasson of Iowa, whose thoughts were consistent with McDougall's.[23] Kasson's resolutions stood a good chance of passage because they were initially supported and ultimately proposed by the Republican representative from Maryland, Henry Winter Davis, and chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Davis met with Romero in January 31, 1864 to discuss the strategy for their introduction. While working on this strategy Montgomery Blair confided to Romero his perception of Seward's policy towards Mexico. Romero reported that:

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[21] Romero to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan. 18, 1863, #21, vol. III, p. 123; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 28.
[22] Donald, *Sumner*, pp. 101-2.
[23] Schoonover, *Mexican Lobby*, pp. 31-8

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> Blair mentioned that the United States government wanted to avoid involving the pride of the French nation in the Mexican conflict. . .In addition, if the French government is left to fight internal discontent and the opposition of the Corps Legislatif, this government [U.S.] believes, it will soon find itself compelled to withdraw the expedition. If the United States intervenes in the matter, however, French national pride will be offended, and under these circumstances the emperor would find sufficient grounds not only to prolong his Mexican intervention indefinitely, but even to make war on the United States.[24]

In the same conversation, Blair then told Romero confidentially that the U.S. was supplying intelligence to Napoleon III's critics in the *Corps législatif*, and that "a large part of the data that Thiers [Louis-Adolphe Thiers, a member of the "Five" liberals who consistently criticized Napoleon III] used so effectively in his speech against the expedition . . . came from this government." Romero wanted the French out of Mexico, the sooner the better and by any means possible. Seward had lunched with Romero before the latter's meeting with Blair, and alluded to the intelligence initiatives in France. Romero concluded:

> Combining this confidential information [from Blair] with impressions Seward conveyed on the day he lunched with me regarding the intelligence links between this government and the opposition in the Corps Legislatif. . .this government's policy in Mexican affairs appears more favorable under the new light.[25]

Romero was coming to an understanding that Seward indeed wanted the French out of Mexico, but had his own methods for achieving that end. Rather than engage the French in a head-on military confrontation in Mexico, Seward was using intelligence to undermine Napoleon III's support at home, while *implying* that the use of U.S. force would not be out of the question in the future. It was from this point that Romero began

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[24] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, Feb. 17, 1862, #29, vol. IV, pp. 52-3; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 34.
[25] Ibid., p. 34.

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to develop a grudging appreciation for the logic if not the efficacy of Seward's approach. This would turn into respect once the crisis had been resolved.

Romero's first duty was to Mexico, however, and he remained committed to encouraging congressmen to press on with their public opposition to the French. In March, Davis said he was still postponing any public debate on a resolution until he was clearer on what exactly French intentions were. He told Romero that intelligence in his possession suggested that the French wanted out of their Mexican enterprise. Romero said he had heard the same thing but had come to the opposite conclusion based on reports in Napoleon III's official newspaper, *Le Moniteur*, and speeches by Eugene Rouher, Napoleon III's Minister of State. Romero provided relevant copies of *Le Moniteur* to Davis and Kasson in order to motivate them to continue the fight. Davis concluded that once it was certain that Maximilian had accepted the offer to become emperor, the House would vote on the resolutions.[26]

On March 16, Romero reported that no sooner were Kasson's resolutions introduced into the House Foreign Relations Committee than its members were called to the State Department, where Seward tried to dissuade them from proceeding. He tried to impress on the committee members the importance of not directly confronting the French, or, at least, not yet. His entreaties were to no avail once the newspapers announced that Maximilian was about to sign the Miramar Convention. On April 4, 1864, the House unanimously passed the following:

> The Congress of the United States are unwilling by silence to leave the nations of the world under the impression that they are indifferent spectators of the deplorable events now transpiring in the republic of Mexico, and that they therefore think fit to declare that it does not accord with the policy of the United

[26] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, March 16, 1864, vol. IV, pp. 112-13; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 37.

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States to acknowledge any monarchical Government erected on the ruins of any republican Government in America under the auspices of any European Power.[27]

Seward's policy now faced a real test. He had been stringing the French along, making his points forcefully but politely in diplomatic exchanges. Yet the resolution from the House, passed unanimously, indicated a level of Francophobia that was inconsistent with Seward's correspondence. French Chargé d'Affaires in Washington, Marc-Antoine Geoffroy, wasted no time in asking for an explanation. The essence of Seward's explanation to Geoffroy was contained in his message to Dayton. He stated at the outset that the resolution "truly interprets the unanimous sentiment of the People of the United States, in regard to Mexico."[28]

Seward then proceeded to give the French a civics lesson that was probably ill advised, even if constitutionally correct. He wrote that the foreign policy concerns addressed in the House resolution were, in fact, "a practical and purely Executive question, and the decision of it constitutionally belongs not to the House of Representatives, nor even to Congress, but to the President of the United States." After some polite words to the effect that the President had received the resolution with all the respect due to Congress, Seward instructed Dayton that the President:

> does not at present contemplate any departure from the policy which this Government has hitherto pursued in regard to the war which exists between France and Mexico. It is hardly necessary to say, that the proceeding of the House of Representatives was adopted upon suggestions arising within itself, and not upon any communication of the Executive Department, and that the French Government would be reasonably apprised of any change of policy upon this subject which the President might at any future time think it proper to adopt.

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[27] *Congressional Globe, 38th Congress, 1st Session,* Washington, D.C., 1864, p 1408-9.
[28] Seward to Dayton, April 7, 1864, #525, DR, Instructions, France, M 77, R57, pp. 43-4.

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Seward the lawyer was, of course, right. Article II, Sec. 1 of the Constitution places the responsibility for foreign affairs squarely in the hands of the President. Nevertheless, Congress has never felt a compelling need to be publicly reminded of that fact. In this case, Henry Winter Davis took particular issue with the fact that the public reminder came via a French newspaper. The French emperor was not averse to using cunning himself, and Seward may not have counted on Napoleon III publishing an edited version of his instructions to Dayton in *Le Moniteur*:

> *Le Gouvernement de l'Empereur a recu de gouvernement des États-Unis des explications satisfaisantes sur le sens et la portée de la résolution prise par l'assemblée des representans à Washington, au sujet des affaires de Mexico. On sait, d'ailleurs, que le Sénat avait déjà ajourné indefiniement l'examen de cette résolution, à laquelle dans tous les cas, le pouvoir exécutif n'aurait point d'accorde sa sanction.* [The Emperor's Government has received from the United States *satisfactory explanation* [emphasis added] as to the sense and bearing of the resolution come to by the House of Representatives at Washington relative to Mexico. It is known, besides, that the Senate has indefinitely postponed the examination of that question to which, in any case the executive power would not have given its sanction.][29]

Congressman Davis was furious when news of the story reached Washington and called for copies of the Seward-Dayton correspondence. He and his colleagues were enraged by the fact that Seward appeared to be placating the French emperor at Congress's expense. Resolutions condemning Seward were proffered in the House, and Romero lobbied for Senate concurrence. But Sumner held firm, expressing his sympathy for Mexico, but asserting "we ought not take any step that would compromise, or make

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[29] *Congressional Globe, 38th Congress*, 1st Session, p. 2427. Henry Winter Davis probably did not quote the original French in Congress, but both the English and French versions appear in the *Globe*.

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more difficult, relations between the United States and France."[30] Seward wrote confidentially to Bigelow about the House vote:

> The war of the French against Mexico is of course a source of continued irritation. The House of Representatives responds promptly to a popular impulse which is as strong as it is universal. Nevertheless, it will be seen in this case, as it was in the affair of the *Trent,* that the Nation [sic] can act with all the circumspection and deliberation which a regard to its condition of distraction and war and social revolution requires.[31]

Seward maintained that his cautious policy would prevail in spite of the political furor mounting around him.

That furor now shifted to the national presidential nominating conventions. In May 1864 in Cleveland, a meeting of dissident Radical Republicans extended the presidential nomination to John C. Fremont. In August 1861, Lincoln had cashiered Fremont, who had been the first presidential nominee of the new Republican Party in 1856, for exceeding his orders.[32] A politically well connected, albeit controversial, general during the war, Fremont, on his own initiative, had attempted to emancipate slaves in Missouri at one point.[33] He had his fingers on the public pulse and called for an aggressive application of the Monroe Doctrine to the French in Mexico. The moderate Republicans, now temporarily called the National Union party in deference to a few key Democrats who joined them, met to re-nominate Lincoln in June. Article Eight of their platform called for the recognition of the Monroe Doctrine as "national policy," something that Seward had been unwilling to do in his public utterances concerning all countries.

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[30] Quoted in Schoonover, *Mexican Lobby*, p. 40.
[31] Seward to Bigelow, Confidential May 5, 1864, in *Retrospections,* II, p. 182.
[32] James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, NY: Oxford U. Press, 1988, pp. 353-4.
[33] In August, 1861, partially to make up for embarrassing losses on the battlefield, Fremont, ostensibly on his authority as a Union general, declared martial law in Missouri, announced the death penalty for Confederates caught behind Union lines, and freed the slaves of Confederate supporters in Missouri, McPherson, *Battle Cry*, p. 352. Lincoln was forced to overturn the order.

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> That the national policy known as the "Monroe Doctrine" has become a recognized principle, and, that the establishment of an anti-republican Government on this continent by any foreign power cannot be tolerated.[34]

Seward was sensitive to the growing drumbeat calling for action in Mexico, or at least to politicians beating the Monroe Doctrine drum for what he perceived as short-term electoral advantage. He kept his counsel mostly to himself in hopes that Lincoln would be nominated without problems and the election resolved in their favor. Seward did trust John Bigelow in Paris, and he wrote him privately and unofficially in June about the dangers of letting foreign policy become partisan:

> Party politicians think that the Mexican question affords them a fulcrum, and they seem willing to work their lever reckless of dangers to the Country [sic] . . . Can anybody doubt that it results from making foreign questions the basis of partisan action? So far we have escaped only this complication in our great trial; I hope we shall continue to steer clear of it.[35]

Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in July 1863 had improved Lincoln's chances. Still, he was not convinced in the summer of 1864 that re-election was probable, much less guaranteed. General Sherman's taking of Atlanta in September 1864, just before the election, was a sorely needed boost. Conversely, General George B. McClellan, the Democratic candidate, was portrayed essentially as a "Copperhead," one who would have sought peace when victory was so near. Lincoln won 212 of 233 electoral votes, losing only Delaware, Kentucky and New Jersey.[36]

Such an overwhelming indication of public support should have effectively ended Lincoln's and Seward's troubles with Congress. But Henry Winter Davis, still smarting

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[34]Quoted in Edmund McPherson, *Political History of the United States of America during the Great Rebellion*, Washington, D.C., 1864, p. 413.
[35] Seward to Bigelow, Private and Unofficial, June 6, 1864, in *Retrospections, vol. II*, p. 191.
[36] Unreconstructed southern states disallowed from voting brought the total number of electoral votes in the 1864 election down to 233 from the 303 in that of 1860.

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over Seward's explanation to Napoleon III concerning his last congressional resolution on Mexico, leveled one last salvo at the Executive branch:

> *Resolved,* That Congress has a constitutional right to an authoritative voice in declaring and prescribing the foreign policy of the United States . . . and it is the constitutional duty of the President to respect that policy not less in diplomatic negotiations than in the use of the national force when authorized by law; and the propriety of any declaration of foreign policy by Congress is sufficiently proved by the vote which pronounces it; and such proposition while pending and undetermined is not a fit topic of diplomatic explanation to any power.[37]

Davis was essentially proposing the unconstitutional idea that Congress had an equal hand in the formulation of foreign policy. The resolution should have been defeated out of hand on that basis, but was tabled instead by a rather close vote, sixty-nine to sixty-three. In a bit of grandstanding, Davis offered to resign his chairmanship of the House Committee on Foreign Relations because the House had proved itself so "unworthy" of having a chairman. His colleagues convinced him to withdraw his offer.[38]

Lincoln's supporters balked at having the President mentioned by name in the resolution, so Davis resubmitted it in two parts. In the first he changed "the constitutional duty of the President" to "the constitutional duty of the executive department" which passed easily. The second part, that essentially proscribed the State Department from discussing congressional resolutions on foreign affairs "with any foreign power," passed by a much narrower margin, sixty-eight to fifty-eight.

The profound implications that such a resolution seemed to hold for the conduct of foreign affairs were never really articulated, for several reasons. One was that the Senate refused to concur. Sumner wanted to help Mexico and roundly disliked Seward, but not enough to change the Constitution. Secondly, Henry Winter Davis was voted out

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[37] Dec. 15, 1864, *Congressional Globe,* 38th Congress, 2nd Sess., Part I, p. 48.
[38] Marvin Goldwert, "Matías Romero and Congressional Opposition to Seward's Policy Towards the French Intervention in Mexico," *Americas,* vol. 22, July 1965, p. 34 and *seriatim.*

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by his Maryland district and would be dead within a year. Seward would have no problems with Gen. Nathaniel Banks of Massachusetts, Davis's replacement as Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Finally, California's Senator McDougall fell to political opposition back home, and the bottle in Washington. By March 1864, a newspaper reported that McDougall:

> has only been in the Senate a few times this Winter [sic], then drunk, booted like a dragoon and spurred like a Spanish vaquero. He falls from his horse on Pennsylvania Avenue. In a word, he is the first drunkard in Washington.[39]

By the outset of 1865, then, Seward's most outspoken congressional critics were out of the picture. Through a combination of electoral success, battlefield victories, luck, and tenacity, Seward had weathered the political storm.

Despite occasional *faux pas*, Seward's work as Secretary of State showed both high intelligence and great geopolitical vision. In his official correspondence, he showed a grasp of complexity and historical precedent, coupled with real life experience, that far exceeded that of his main adversaries, particularly Napoleon III. With a few notable exceptions, he was legalistic and deliberate in his approach to the diplomatic problems before him. The picture that domestic adversaries, such as Welles, painted of him as a meddlesome gadfly, consumed with his own ego, is totally at odds with this, a contradiction hard to explain.

Seward had flaws, but overlooking things of importance generally was not one of them. More troubling were the instances when Seward allowed confidential State Department correspondence to be published, which, he must have known, would aggravate his critics in the Senate. Equating abolitionists with slave owners on paper, even if in a confidential communication, was inexcusable for one with his political experience. Telling the French that, even if Congress complained, the President and the

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[39] Russell Buchanan, "James A. McDougall – A Forgotten Senator," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, XV, No. 3, (1936), pp. 199-212.

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Secretary of State would decide foreign policy was unnecessarily incendiary under the circumstances, even if constitutionally correct. It was naïve on Seward's part to think that Napoleon III would not publish that explanation, edited in a manner to put himself in the best light.

Yet those few mistakes pale in comparison to what Seward was able to accomplish during the war years. Foremost among his diplomatic goals, his efforts greatly contributed to keeping England and France out of the war. He was now about to turn his full attention to getting the French out of Mexico without bloodshed. In a matter of months the Confederates would surrender and the Union would be saved. The executive branch had maintained its authority despite repeated attempts at encroachment by the legislative. Seward had personally withstood attacks from both within and without the government. Some of his principal adversaries had either self-destructed, as in the case of McDougall, or had been voted out, like Henry Winter Davis. Chase had flinched when called on to confront Seward in front of the president and his fellow cabinet members.

Sumner also disliked personal confrontation and opposed Seward behind-the-scenes. However, when it came time for him to make his case forcefully against Seward to the President in front of his fellow Senators and the assembled cabinet (without Seward), he also demurred. After the Senate adjourned in July 1864, Sumner biographer David Donald characterized the Massachusetts Senator as "tired and dispirited. Worn out by seven months of almost daily attendance in the Senate, unable to shake off his cold, depressed by the heats of Washington, he had an overwhelming sense of defeat."[40] In what must have been a delicious irony for the Secretary of State, Sumner had actually advanced Seward's policy by repeatedly tabling belligerent resolutions in the Senate relating to Mexico. Entering 1865, the Lincoln administration had been guaranteed another four years by the voters, and had been vindicated both domestically and

[40] Donald, *Charles Sumner*, p. 185.

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internationally. The moderate Republican position had prevailed and the personal political fortunes of Lincoln and Seward never looked brighter. Ironically, the military that had been largely responsible for their electoral victory might now be responsible for the failure of Seward's judicious Mexican policy.

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CHAPTER FOUR

SEWARD OUTFOXES GRANT AND ROMERO

In 1865 there was only one group capable of upsetting William Henry Seward's cautious policy towards Mexico – the U.S. military. At the outset of the Civil War, Seward's principal diplomatic goal was to keep England and France from aiding the Confederacy by according it diplomatic recognition. After the war was over, his principal goal was to keep either a totally American force, or one comprising mostly American volunteers, from entering Mexico and forcibly evicting the French. The distinction would be important in the negotiations between Mexico and the U.S. over the prospective force, as Mexico wanted U.S. leadership and materiel, but did not want an occupying army. On a practical level, Mexico's policy would mean that U.S. soldiers would have to be demobilized, then sign up immediately as volunteers ostensibly under overall Mexican control. It was an elaborate charade that Seward made sure never came to pass.

Seward had accomplished his first goal, but the second would prove daunting in light of Seward's prior experience with the War Department. There, his otherwise pervasive influence in government had declined because of a number of errors in judgment. He would have to apply his legendary skill for handling strong personalities and rapidly changing situations if he were to keep the Mexican invasion from taking place.

The political vacuum created after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the attack on Seward in April 1865 made Seward's contribution even more valuable than it had been when Lincoln was alive. Few looked to relatively unknown Democrat Andrew Johnson for leadership. Indeed, Johnson generally made matters worse early in his term as his harsh anti-Confederacy rhetoric rarely coincided with his actions. Tired of presidential temporizing, Radical Republicans in Congress demanded that their agenda be

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implemented posthaste. Given the sharp political divisions of the day, victorious Union generals like Ulysses Grant, William Sherman and Philip Sheridan, all now perceived as heroes in the north, could have exploited this vacuum relatively easily to their own ends. As will be seen, Grant was already making forays into foreign policy by the summer of 1865. Seward had been grievously injured in April, but his recuperation was proceeding to the point where he could assume some of his old duties at the State Department by mid-summer. The urgent political matters cited above were what awaited him on his return.

Seward also had external pressures to consider. Mexican Minister to Washington Matias Romero had befriended Grant prior to Lincoln's assassination and quickly perceived Grant's political ascendancy. Romero worked tirelessly to enlist Grant in the invasion scheme that he was coordinating under orders from Juárez. Although he had fought bravely during the Mexican-American War between 1846-48, Grant had not approved of that war, and he retained a great deal of sympathy for the average Mexican. Grant biographer Brooks Simpson writes that Grant "would judge the Mexican-American War to be 'one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation.'"[1] According to Simpson, Grant was skeptical of annexation and disapproved of Polk's precipitating a fight with the Mexicans merely to claim that the U.S. was only acting in self-defense. Another Grant biographer, William Hesseltine, writes that Grant continued to keep close track of Mexican affairs and that roughly fifteen years after the Mexican-American War, he told his staff that "as soon as Lee was defeated they would have to fight the imperialists [Maximilian and the French]."[2]

According to Romero's dispatches in the spring and summer of 1865, Grant was very favorably disposed to the invasion and had already taken some steps to implement it. Conversely, Seward's efforts to counter Grant and Romero occupied much of his time

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[1] Brooks D. Simpson, *Ulysses S. Grant: Triumph over Adversity 1822-1865,* Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 2000, p. 30.
[2] William B. Hesseltine, *Ulysses S. Grant: Politician,* NY: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1935, pp. 52-3.

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once he returned to work from the summer of 1865 to March of 1867 when French troops finally left. Napoleon had made a public pronouncement of projected French troop withdrawal on January 22, 1866, in a speech in front of the French legislature. In that speech, Napoleon III unilaterally declared victory for France in Mexico and said that Maximilian could now stand alone – a bold-faced lie.[3] Ten months later the French had still not departed, and the cries for American military involvement were increasing.

The new President, Andrew Johnson, was favorably disposed towards republican Mexico but had not as yet made up his mind about sending American troops there. Romero had met with Johnson after the assassination and found him prepared publicly to invoke the Monroe Doctrine as the rationale for the U.S. removing the French from Mexico, something Seward had assiduously avoided. Historian Thomas Schoonover notes that "Johnson wanted arms made available to the Mexican Liberals and directed General Grant to act on his own authority to aid them."[4] Rather than using regular troops, Johnson favored a private force composed of Americans and Mexicans, led by an American general. Johnson's preference dovetailed with the plans of Mexican Minister Romero, and they had the advantage that the American officers would be paid by Mexico should the plan come to fruition.

This approach to ousting the French was precisely what Seward wanted to avoid. Johnson was a neophyte in foreign affairs, and he relied heavily on Seward. On the other hand, Johnson wanted to be re-elected in his own right in 1868 and was seeking a vindication for his policies in the 1866 mid-term elections. Bringing Romero along on the "Swing-Around-the-Circle," saber rattling about Mexico, and cries for the defense of the Monroe Doctrine, were several strategies Johnson was willing to try in order to improve his chances for election.[5] The problem for Seward was to prevent Romero from

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[3] Hannah and Hannah, *Napoleon III and Mexico*, p. 271; Cunningham, *Mexico and the Foreign Policy of Napoleon III*, p. 185.
[4] Thomas D. Schoonover, ed., *Mexican Lobby: Matias Romero in Washington, 1861-1867*, Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1986, p. 50.
[5] Hans Trefousse, *Andrew Johnson, A Biography*, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., p. 270.

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having undue influence on President Johnson on the one hand, and to keep the foreign affairs aspect of Mexican policy from falling into the hands of the military, on the other. Romero had managed to see Johnson a number of times since the assassination while Seward was out of the picture, and he felt convinced that Johnson would advocate a more belligerent policy towards the French in Mexico, one squarely based on the Monroe Doctrine. Romero was pleased to report that it appeared that Seward's cautious diplomacy would be repudiated:

> The president's manner, more than his words . . . convince me that he will not approve Seward's policy. Seward will then either have to change his conduct, submitting to Johnson's ideas, which will doubtless be a complete defense of the Monroe Doctrine, or he will leave the cabinet.[6]

Romero reported going directly from this meeting with Johnson to another with Grant, where Grant seconded the president's endorsement of the Monroe Doctrine and suggested sending a message to France that the U.S. was prepared to enforce that doctrine militarily. Grant also informed Romero at this meeting that he had chosen General John M. Schofield to lead the invasion force, should one be authorized. Schofield had attended West Point with General Philip Sheridan and had worked closely with General William Sherman in the southern campaign at the close of the war. He fought with Sherman in Atlanta, and stopped Confederate general and former West Point classmate John B. Hood at the Battle of Franklin. At the age of thirty-four, he was promoted to brigadier general for his role in these campaigns and put in Chargé of the Department of North Carolina, where he was serving when the war ended.[7]

Seward knew that with a prominent general like Schofield at its head, supported by friends like Grant and Sheridan in Washington, the invasion plan was quickly becoming a reality. Radicals in Congress would have also looked kindly on the invasion.

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[6] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, July 8, 1865, #328, vol. V, pp. 455-7; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 77.

[7] John M. Schofield, *Forty-Six Years in the Army*, NY: The Century Co., 1897, Ch. XIX.

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When Seward got word of Romero's involvement, particularly his frequent face-to-face meetings with the President during Seward's convalescence, he was furious. He had already composed a circular message to the diplomatic corps in Washington in 1865 reminding them that all substantive diplomatic activity had to be carried on through the State Department. The message came to be known as the "Romero Circular," and the Mexican Minister was certain that it was directed specifically at him.[8] A superb bureaucratic infighter, Seward knew that regaining the upper hand on Mexican matters was essential, now that his own recuperation allowed him to re-enter the fray. Getting the president's ear, and limiting Romero's access were central to that strategy.

For all his genius and hard work, Seward was prone to occasional mistakes, some more inopportune than others. The bureaucratic infighting now called for might have been relatively easy for the chessmaster Seward if government departments other than the military had been involved. When it came to the military, however, Seward's skills seemed to falter. A man of slight stature, he had not himself been a soldier or an officer, holding only a ceremonial commission from the New York militia in his former role as governor.[9] Hence he could not exact respect from military men on the basis of his physical presence or his exploits in battle.

Secondly, from the beginning of the Lincoln Administration, Seward committed some serious mistakes when it came to military affairs. Such mistakes were understandable given the magnitude of the problems he faced and the relentless pressure for quick decisions required under the circumstances. His political skills and experience should have made his input invaluable to the decision-making process concerning the war. After all, politics played a major role in Union military affairs and Seward was used to success when he applied his acute intelligence to complicated strategic problems. The

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[8] State Dept. Circular, July 26, 1865; Romero to Ministro de Relaciónes Exteriores, July 30, 1865, cited in Thomas D. Schoonover, *Dollars Over Dominion*, p. 179-80.

[9] Seward's uniform, revealing his stature, is in glass case at the Seward Home/Museum in Auburn, NY.

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political-military situation facing the Union after the debacle at the first battle of Bull Run seemed to call for just that ability. Instead, Seward limited his effectiveness with the military by some poor choices.

To see how Seward got into an awkward situation with the military, it will be necessary to backtrack somewhat chronologically to see how some of the decisions he made early in the Civil War affected the implementation of his policy towards France later. Seward was also a lifelong politician, and his errors in these decisions were more often political than diplomatic, more often matters of personnel than policy. One was his unquestioning support for his old friend Thurlow Weed, even when Weed was implicated in profiteering. His faulty strategic advice concerning the re-supply of Forts Pickens and Sumter was a second. His worst mistake, however, was his support for Simon Cameron, Lincoln's first Secretary of War.

Simon Cameron had been appointed to the cabinet as a *quid pro quo* for his support of Lincoln at the Chicago Republican nominating convention in 1860. That alone was not shocking, as Lincoln had balanced his cabinet with political considerations in mind. Seward had a low opinion of Cameron's abilities but stood behind him because he knew Cameron would not be a strong adversary in the cabinet. For his part, Cameron was willing to put up with Seward's interference because he perceived the financial opportunities open to him as Secretary of War. The Union was faced with the prospect of building an army practically from scratch. The amount of money that would change hands in such an endeavor was monumental. Cameron had been in politics for thirty years and could easily see his opportunities.[10] In his hallmark-convoluted style, Welles observed:

> The understanding that existed between Mr. Seward and Cameron at the organization of the Cabinet and not a very high appreciation of the abilities of Mr.

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[10] Salmon P. Chase, *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet: The Civil War Diaries of Salmon P. Chase,* ed. by David Donald, NY: Longmans, Green and Co., 1954, pp. 11-13.

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> Cameron led Mr. Seward to believe he might make himself familiar with the War Department and assume as occasion required some of the duties of the Secretary of War, an assumption that was not entirely satisfactory to that officer.[11]

Cameron proved to be a crook from the start. Congress eventually held an inquiry into practices in the War Department under Cameron and his subordinates that ran to three thousand pages when published in 1862.[12] Cameron had increased the number of his fellow Pennsylvanians in the War Department from five to twenty-seven, "all selected for political motives." Many of those Pennsylvania appointments were purchasing agents in a position to issue what proved to be very lucrative contracts. To Seward's consternation, Cameron had also concluded several deals with Weed; a possible explanation of Seward's initial tolerance of Cameron despite growing rumors of the latter's avarice.

Two examples will suffice to illuminate the problem. Weed and three others borrowed money to buy the steamer *Cataline* for $18,000, then chartered it to the Union navy for $10,000 a month for three months, with a guarantee of $50,000 should it sink. Among the things the *Cataline* carried were "straw hats, linen pantaloons, pickles and other articles not found in any army ration list," all approved by a Weed appointee. Weed had also reportedly assessed a five per cent commission on "powder sold to the War Department."[13] Such allegations were particularly damning in light of the horrible casualties being sustained.

Incompetence and corruption would sink Cameron within two years of his appointment, but Seward needed his support in the interim for several reasons. Principal among these was that Seward had concurred in what came to be perceived as an egregious decision on the part of Cameron and the General-in-Chief of the Army,

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[11] A. Howard Meneely, "Three Manuscripts of Gideon Welles," *American Historical Review, XXXI, No. 3,* Jan. 1926, p. 486.
[12] Hendrick, *Lincoln's War Cabinet,* Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1946, pp. 220-223.
[13] Ibid., p. 221.

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Winfield Scott, concerning Forts Sumter and Pickens. Scott had been one of the heroes of the Mexican-American War, but at the outset of the Civil War he was seventy-five, very ill, and exceedingly overweight. Historian Burton Hendrick described him as "so senile and weakened by dropsy that he could not walk and had to be carried by orderlies from his carriage to his office."[14] Even in his debilitated condition, he complained that Seward knew more about what was going on in the war than he did, and vastly more than Secretary of War Cameron.

It must be remembered that Seward was convinced in early 1861 that there would be no war, that South Carolina's actions were only a passing aberration. Since the Nullification controversy, South Carolina had adopted radical positions, and Seward was convinced that the rest of the south, particularly the upper south, would not be swayed by South Carolinian intransigence.[15] Hence, when it became clear early in 1861 that the Confederates would not allow the re-supply or reinforcement of Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor, Seward and others in the Cabinet wondered if reinforcing the garrison merited starting a civil war. General Scott thought not, and even suggested that Fort Pickens should also be allowed to fall into Confederate hands. Part of Scott's argument could be attributed to the fact that the re-supply of Sumter, which stood on an island in Charleston bay, presented thorny military problems.

However, that was not the case with Fort Pickens, opposite Pensacola, Florida. Yet Scott, a Virginian, with the consent of Seward and Cameron, advocated abandoning them both to "instantly soothe and give confidence to the eight remaining slave-holding States, and render their cordial adherence to this Union perpetual."[16] Seward saw the surrender of the forts as a goodwill gesture that would "reassure the upper South and

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[14] Ibid., p. 225.

[15] The Nullification controversy arose over South Carolina's challenge to federal authority in 1832-33. South Carolina maintained that it did not have to abide by the federal law known in South Carolina as the "Tariff of Abominations." The controversy was a major step in the escalating crisis between the North and South; see William Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: the Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836*, NY: Harper & Row, 1966.

[16] James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, NY: Oxford U. Press, 1988, p. 269.

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strengthen unionists in the Confederate states."[17] According to historian James McPherson, Seward "was playing a deep and devious game" in which he was trying to situate himself as the "premier" of the new administration.[18]

Before Lincoln's inauguration, and without consulting the new President, Seward leaked to the press that Sumter would be abandoned. Seward was not alone in the cabinet taking this position, as all but Treasury Secretary Chase and Postmaster-General Blair initially thought Fort Sumter too costly to hold. Press opposition to the abandonment mounted in the north, and Seward's leak to the press backfired.[19] Navy Secretary Welles and Attorney-General Bates now joined Secretaries Chase and Blair in advocating the re-supply of Sumter, while Seward and Interior Secretary Caleb Smith continued to oppose the measure. Sensing a "no-win" situation, the wily Cameron absented himself from the vote. Hendrick hypothesizes that Cameron purposely missed voting on the issue because, as the cabinet member most directly affected, he did not want to appear afraid of armed conflict. On the other hand, he wanted and needed Seward's continued support in the cabinet and did not want to vote against him on such an important issue. He did not even submit his written thoughts on the matter when directly ordered to do so by the President.

Lincoln ultimately decided on the re-supply effort that led to the Confederate firing on Sumter between April 12 and 14, 1861, the immediate cause of the U.S. Civil War. Lincoln had come to the decision that negotiating with the secessionists would not be possible. Thus, the advice that Seward, Scott, and Cameron had provided was essentially useless. Worse, in this instance, was the fact that Seward had also leaked that advice to the Union's enemies. On this issue Cameron was Seward's only ally, and Seward reciprocated Cameron's support. Scott became expendable once news of his role in the Sumter and Pickens decision was made public. Poor Union military performance

[17] Ibid., p. 268.
[18] Ibid., p. 270.
[19] Ibid., p. 268.

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and the aging general's degenerating health made inevitable Scott's resignation in November 1861.

Seward's initial foray into military affairs had gone very poorly. Knowing that Cameron had fallen from Lincoln's favor, Seward now sought to align himself with someone who might help him achieve a modicum of success in military affairs. He needed an officer who could both win on the battlefield and provide him with up-to-date intelligence. Thus he allied himself with the general who appeared to have those capabilities, George B. McClellan, who would replace Scott after being put in Chargé of Union forces in the east. The *quid pro quo* for Seward's support in the cabinet was that McClellan would keep Seward abreast of military developments.

What Seward and McClellan had in common at this juncture was a desire to re-unify the country without subjecting the South to excessive brutality. In the long run, victory and a "soft" war were to prove mutually exclusive. Lincoln was ultimately forced to rely on generals like Ulysses Grant, William Sherman, and Philip Sheridan, who were willing to punish not only Confederate soldiers, but also the general population of the Confederacy, in order to achieve victory. Hence the marriage of convenience between Seward and McClellan foundered on the fact that McClellan proved so tentative in actual battle and so disdainful of President Lincoln. Thus, by 1862, Cameron was of little further use to Seward, Scott was gone, and McClellan was proving an embarrassment, especially after the Battle of Antietam in September 1862. Seward's association with those military officials connected to Union setbacks and the alleged profiteering of Weed were also eroding his public prestige and effectiveness within the government.

Cameron was enough of a politician to know that the public outcry about Union battlefield failures and growing reports of corruption would soon cost him his job, especially once Scott retired. Unlike the general, he intended to leave neither quickly nor quietly. He sensed the rift that was growing in the Cabinet over Union policy on emancipation. Treasury Secretary Chase wanted immediate emancipation, consistent with

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policy long advocated by his Radical associates in Congress. Cameron saw that it might be politic to ally himself with such a position, even though he had not been an abolitionist in the past, much less a proponent of immediate emancipation. Cameron distributed the annual report of the War Department to postmasters throughout the country late in 1861. Without consulting the president, Cameron called for a slave army:

> If it shall be found that the men who have been held by the rebels as slaves are capable of bearing arms and performing efficient military service, it is the right, and may become the duty of the government to arm and equip them, and employ their services against the rebels under proper military regulation, discipline and command.[20]

This was, of course, the exact opposite of the policy that Lincoln and Seward were advocating at the time. Lincoln always believed that the fate of the Union would be decided in the border states of Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland and Delaware. From the President's perspective, nothing would drive these states into the Confederacy faster than talk of a "slave army." Lincoln ordered the offending passages expunged before the official report was submitted to Congress. Unfortunately, many of the reports already circulated to postmasters could not be recalled, and Cameron's proposal, looking every bit like an official document emanating from the Executive branch, gained wide distribution and caused the President significant aggravation.[21]

It was now clear that Cameron would have to go, and Seward, embarrassed by his former protégé, was happy to speed the process. Welles pointed out that the Pennsylvanian Cameron had his own coterie of friends and advisers who were not anxious for him to appear as Seward's lackey:

> Neither to him nor them was it altogether pleasant that he should be considered as a mere secondary personage, or convenience to the Secretary of State, yet this was

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[20] Quoted in Hendrick, *Lincoln's War Cabinet*, p. 230; McPherson, *Battle Cry*, pp. 357-8.
[21] Salmon P. Chase, *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet: The Civil War Diaries of Salmon P. Chase, edited by David Donald*, NY: Longmans, Green and Co., 1954, pp. 47, 60-2; Welles, *Diary, vol. I*, p. 57.

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> at the beginning the received opinion, and both Mr. Seward and his supporters were willing to encourage and strengthen that opinion.[22]

Seward used one of the oldest ploys in the political book to resolve this awkward situation. In mid-January 1862, Seward arranged for Cameron to be named U.S. Minister to Russia to get him as far away as possible from political mischief and the potential for further corruption. This saved face for Cameron with his politically important Pennsylvanians. Cameron had hoped that his new-found Radical friends would have enough clout to save his job, but widely distributing presidential policy without first consulting the president was too much even for them. Welles wrote:

> There was great sensitiveness in the public mind on the subject [arming former slaves]. Fremont had been disciplined in regard to it. The conclusion to which the government would arrive was not doubted; but that one of the heads of department should make it a prominent part of his report, and, without consulting the President to whom it was addressed and on whom was the responsibility of the measure and to whom it properly belonged to determine the policy of the Administration and communicate it to Congress, was admitted to be indecorous and improper.[23]

When hard-working and acerbic Edwin Stanton took over from Cameron, Seward quickly began to limit his role in military affairs. By now, he was faced with several diplomatic crises that demanded his full attention, especially the ongoing fear that France and Great Britain would formally recognize the Confederacy. However, his experience with Cameron, Scott and McClellan had shown that the military was a realm in which his legendary political acumen did not seem to work. Confidence in his old ally Weed was shaken, and his hope that the Union would be restored without devastation and great loss of life now seemed unfounded. He turned to his diplomatic duties with a new sense of

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[22] Ibid., p. 486.
[23] Welles, *Narrative*, p. 487.

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resolve, hoping that a major Union military victory would stem the tide of public dissatisfaction with the Lincoln Administration's performance in its first two years.

Seward and Lincoln would need victories on the battlefield to bolster their political fortunes, jeopardized until mid-summer 1863 by poor Union performance, and a lack of clear diplomatic victories. The *Trent* affair of 1861-1862 had not resulted in war, but many Union supporters resented the release of the two Confederate diplomats, Mason and Slidell, from Union custody. Seward was having success keeping Britain and France from recognizing the Confederacy, but such an initiative was a slow, day-to-day process that did not garner headlines. Over time, Grant and his subordinates came to realize that Lincoln and Seward needed them as much, if not more, than they needed the President and Secretary of State. That may explain why Grant felt free to take the latitude in 1865, in initially consenting to a U.S. supported military mission to free republican Mexico from the French.

Seward continued his diplomatic initiatives with the French throughout 1863 and 1864. As noted, California's McDougall had engaged the debate in the Senate, and calls for more aggressive action against the French in Mexico abounded not only in Congress, but in newspapers and in a public club devoted to the maintenance of the Monroe Doctrine.[24] By the summer of 1865, words alone would not be good enough for many. The French had to go either willingly or by force, and the plan to put General Schofield in Chargé of a volunteer army to invade Mexico was rapidly coalescing. Even though Schofield was the man whom President Johnson and General Grant had designated to liberate Mexico from the French, this was not exclusively a U.S. decision. The Juárez government would be paying for at least part of the expedition and had to authorize any transgression of its borders.

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[24] Perkins, *Monroe Doctrine*, 1933 edition, pp. 442-455. Perkins specifically cites the Defenders of the Monroe Doctrine Club established in New Orleans in 1864. Perkins thinks that this club might have been part of a Mexican propaganda effort, pp. 448-49.

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Mexican Minister Romero had been advocating such an armed invasion for some time, but his first preference to lead the invasion was Grant himself, then Sherman or Sheridan. General Schofield was not among his original choices at all. Given growing indication of Johnson's weaknesses, Grant was starting to see his political possibilities by this point. Sherman was not interested in going to Mexico, and Sheridan was deemed of more use commanding the troops along the Rio Grande, where Grant had assigned him.[25]

According to Romero, Grant was angry that France had tried to take advantage of the Civil War to insert itself into Mexico to crush republican aspirations. Romero reported that at a gathering on May 8, 1865 Grant said that he anticipated seeing the new French Minister to Washington, the Marquis de Montholon. He intended to use sarcasm at the meeting, telling the Marquis that "the United States would pursue the same policy of neutrality and nonintervention in regard to Mexico which France had adopted toward the United States Civil War." Grant implied that sixty-thousand U.S. troops would be ready to invade Mexico as soon as ". . . they were mustered out, and that this [U.S.] government would not oppose the action."[26] By this time Grant had chosen Schofield to lead the expedition, and Schofield wrote of his selection:

> the necessity was at once recognized of organizing a new army for the express purpose of acting against the French army in Mexico. . . It was proposed that this new army should be enlisted and organized under the republican government of Mexico, the only government recognized by the United States in that country. This course would avoid the necessity of any political action of the government of the United States in the premises . . . Grant . . .was requested to select an officer to organize and command the proposed army.[27]

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[25] Philip H. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs of P.H. Sheridan, General United States Army, 2 vols.*, NY: Charles L. Webster & Co., 1888, II, pp. 206-228, especially p. 209.
[26] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, May 8, 1865, #202, pp. 59-60; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 59.
[27] John M. Schofield, *Forty-Six Years in the Army*, New York: The Century Co., 1897, p. 379.

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The question poses itself, of course, as to why an "independent" army, led by American general officers, but also staffed with Mexican officers and a combination of Mexican and U.S. troops, was necessary. Moreover, republican Mexico, always in desperate financial straits during this period, was willing to pay rather generously for such a force. The answer is that clearly the Juárez regime did not want this to appear to be a totally U.S. force that would rekindle the animosities of the Mexican-American War. A "coalition" force would be more palatable to the Mexicans being liberated from the French than one composed exclusively of foreigners.

Schofield was probably not aware of all of these intricacies, and did not know that he was about to become a pawn in an intricate game between Johnson, Grant, Romero and Seward. Seward desperately wanted to derail this invasion plan, but he met anyway with all the above, plus Secretary of War Stanton, to hear the plan presented. Schofield reported that "not much was said between me and the President or either of the secretaries at that time about the means to be employed; but it appeared to be understood by all that force would probably be necessary, and for some time no other means were considered."[28] This was Schofield's understanding, but not that of Seward, who had been considering "other means" for four years. He needed more time for his diplomacy to work and had to find a way to stop what was becoming a fast-moving train of armed intervention. Secretary of War Stanton granted Schofield a leave of absence to start organizing the invasion. In his memoirs, published in 1888, General Sheridan, who had been sent by Grant right after the conclusion of the Civil War to the Rio Grande to intimidate the French in 1865, attributed much of the success of Seward's strategy to oust the French to his army:

> I doubt very much whether such results could have been achieved without the presence of an American army on the Rio Grande, which, be it remembered, was

[28] Ibid., p. 379-80.

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> sent there because, in General Grant's words, the French invasion of Mexico was so closely related to the rebellion as to be essentially part of it.[29]

By the end of July 1865, Schofield was negotiating his personal financial stake in the undertaking with Romero. The Mexican Minister was a little taken aback by the general's demands. Schofield had been offered $100,000 to head the operation with ten percent of that payable in advance. Schofield wanted the whole $100,000 up front, explaining that he was taking a big risk, had large family responsibilities, and was not personally wealthy. Romero said that the Mexican government was still very strapped for cash, and that he understood that the large payments would be made at the end of the war, but most likely in real estate instead of cash. Moreover, if Schofield received his bonus up front, other U.S. officers who were volunteering for the mission might demand the same treatment. Schofield's insistence on payment of so much cash in advance gave Romero pause, and he reported to his government:

> Advancing the commanding general all of his bonus suggests that he might not retain a great interest in the enterprise's success, particularly since he had made this point a condition, *sine qua non* [without which, nothing, i.e. a deal-breaker].

But on the brighter side, Romero continued:

> If the enterprise has great success, as seems highly probable, contributing not only toward terminating our war with France but also to Mexico's development and future prosperity, this sum is truly a *bagatelle* [trifle].[30]

In his own description of events, Schofield was rather laconic. In his memoir, he stated that the "Mexican authorities proposed to furnish the means by which this army should be paid and the expense of military operations defrayed, and to that end a loan was to be negotiated in the United States."[31] There is clearly a discrepancy, of no little import, as

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[29] Sheridan, *Memoirs,* II p. 228.
[30]Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, July 30, 1865, #367, vol. V, pp. 513-19; see also Schoonover, *Lobby,* p. 87.
[31] Schofield, *Forty-Six Years,* p.380

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to the source of funding for the operation. For his part, Romero reported to his government on his conversation with Schofield about payment that the republican government of Mexico "had promised very liberal bonuses to officers and soldiers who came to aid us in the war against the French, but with the intention of paying them at the end of the war and then principally in real estate."[32] Given his strategy, Seward would have had no interest whatsoever in backing a loan of U.S. funds to facilitate an invasion he did not want. The Senate had consistently denied Mexico funds without land or minerals as collateral. Hence, Romero's version of the payment protocol seems more credible. It does, however, seem to conflict with guiding principle of the Juárez regime of not alienating any more land. Clearly the land given as payment would be personal, and the exact amounts were never determined. Nonetheless, the method of payment proposed by Romero came quite close to trading Mexican land for foreign might.

Grant's orders to Sheridan on the Rio Grande concerning Schofield were also revealing. He told Sheridan that he was unable to explain Schofield's mission because "much that will have to be learned to fix his determination, whether to go or not, has yet to found out in Washington."[33] Grant went on in his orders to exceed his brief as Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Army and usurp the Secretary of State's prerogatives as well. He said that President Johnson "agrees in the duty we owe to ourselves to maintain the Monroe doctrine, both as a principle and as a security for our future peace." Grant continued in the foreign policy vein by stating:

> It is a fixed determination on the part of the people of the United States, and I think myself safe in saying on the part of the President also, that an empire shall not be established on this continent by the aid of foreign bayonets. A war on the part of the United States is to be avoided, if possible; but it will be better to go to war now, when but little aid given to the Mexicans will settle the question, than to

[32] Romero, July 30, 1865, *Correspondencia, Vol 5*, pp. 513-19, quoted in Schoonover, *Mexican Lobby*, p. 85.
[33] Schofield, *Forty-Six Years*, p. 381.

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have in prospect a greater war, sure to come if delayed until the empire is established.[34]

Grant was essentially contemplating getting the U.S. involved in a war in Mexico on his own initiative. He told Sheridan that army surplus could be made available to republican Mexicans fighting the French, and that, for a nominal fee, soldiers could retain their weapons when mustering out. Without orders from Johnson to the contrary, Grant, on his own authority, was allowing Sheridan to let Schofield have whatever he might need for the invasion force. Congress had approved none of this, and the entire plan flew in the face of the policy Seward had carefully constructed over four years. President Johnson had not explicitly approved the plan, and Grant's rationale was that "I think myself safe in saying" that his ideas coincided with the President's and the "fixed determination" of most Americans. Grant chose not to explain how he arrived at his perception of that "fixed determination."

Seward had to move quickly, even though he was continuing his recuperation from the assassination attempt at the shore in Cape May, New Jersey. He invited Schofield there and appealed to his vanity by offering the war-weary soldier the opportunity to be a diplomat in Paris. Without actually delineating what Schofield's diplomatic status would be there, he told Schofield that he would be charged with convincing Napoleon III to withdraw rather than fight. Schofield wrote of the meeting:

> The time had evidently arrived when Napoleon must be informed in language which could not be misunderstood what was the real sentiment of the government and people of the United States on the Mexican question. It was difficult, perhaps impossible, to express that sentiment in official diplomatic language that an emperor could afford to receive from a friendly power. It was therefore desirable that the disagreeable information be conveyed to Napoleon in a way which would command full credence, and which he yet need not regard as offensive. Mr.

[34] Quoted in Ibid., p. 381

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> Seward's explanations . . .were summed up in the words: "I want you to get your legs under Napoleon's mahogany, and tell him he must get out of Mexico."[35]

Seward repeated to Schofield what he had frequently expressed to his Ministers in Paris, i.e. that the U.S. would never tolerate in the Western Hemisphere a government established by the force of a European power. Persistence in such an endeavor only jeopardized the long and basically cordial bilateral relationship between the U.S. and France. The forcible eviction of French troops in Mexico would only lead to animosity between the two countries, possibly war. After this encounter, Schofield admitted that Seward's presentation, "seemed to put upon me the responsibility of deciding the momentous question of future friendship or enmity between my own country and our ancient ally and friend."[36]

Honored and flattered by the gravity of the mission Seward proposed, Schofield accepted in early August 1865. He cited his "natural love of peace," and the "dictates of patriotism as contrasted with mere military ambition" as reasons for his choice. A cynical observer might have noted that financial arrangements for the Mexican military mission had bogged down, and that Romero was having second thoughts about advancing $100,000 to the general who was his fourth choice. By August 23, Seward had the official diplomatic papers in Schofield's hands, all approved by Secretary of War Stanton. Then, in one of the cagiest moves of his entire tenure, Seward had Schofield wait almost three months to leave for his assignment. Schofield reported that the ostensible reason was that "correspondence then going on with the French government rendered it advisable that my visit be delayed" until answers were received.[37] The delays in transmitting and receiving diplomatic correspondence played right into Seward's hands in this case.

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[35] Ibid., p. 384-5.
[36] Ibid. p. 383.
[37] Ibid., p. 384.

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The question, of course, poses itself as to whether or not a replacement could have been found for Schofield. Clearly there were many unemployed and underemployed former Union generals on hand. However, once contracted by Romero, given leave for this specific purpose by Secretary of War Stanton, and approved by both Grant and Juárez, it would have been awkward to replace Schofield. Moreover, Romero and Juárez had no way of knowing the length of Schofield's diplomatic mission, much less that he would be offered one in the first place.

The argument here is that Schofield, *per se,* was not important. What was important, as is indicated by the diplomatic correspondence cited below, was that the U.S. not act precipitously. Unlike Grant, Seward did not see the French Intervention in Mexico as part of the Civil War, needing immediate resolution in order to wrap up that war's loose ends. It was a separate diplomatic matter that called for a diplomatic solution. Although it cannot be known for sure, barring a direct order from the President to the contrary, Seward probably would have sought a way to derail almost any plan for military invasion of Mexico in 1865. Moreover, had Romero been privy to Seward's correspondence with U.S. Minister to France, John Bigelow, he would have known that French resolve concerning Mexico was beginning to crack. Had he been armed with this information, Romero could have then averted his government that the very risky and expensive invasion scheme that was being contemplated in Washington and along the Rio Grande, might not be necessary at all.

While Grant and Romero were planning, and Schofield was packing, the negotiations between the U.S. and France were taking place, as they had all along, through traditional diplomatic channels, between Seward, Bigelow, and the French Foreign Minister Drouyn de Lhuys. In a series of long, substantive dispatches throughout the fall of 1865, Bigelow reported on the deteriorating French position both at home and abroad, and offered his own solutions. In a long message written on August 21, 1865, Bigelow encouraged Seward to stick with his non-interventionist policy, regardless of

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cries of Congressmen and journalists to the contrary, "the people rely a great deal more upon you and upon the President to regulate their foreign policy than they do upon their representatives in Congress or upon the editors of newspapers."[38]

Bigelow had six reasons for not intervening militarily in Mexico. Initially, he did not believe that Americans would actually fight to defend the Monroe Doctrine, and that fighting for it would only needlessly alienate most European governments. He had little confidence in a "Latin race," i.e. the Mexicans, being able to keep a republican form of government running for long. There were economic aspects to his objections as well. Bigelow maintained that a war in Mexico would damage U.S. credit in Europe at a time when the U.S. needed loans, and delay needed currency reforms that might lead to tariff reduction. His final reason was that the U.S. needed to display:

> superior sagacity and discretion of a real representative democracy. In a war involving our national existence, like the one just closed, we might resist the world in arms successfully; but in a war to redress the wrongs of Mexico or to propagate republicanism by the sword, we should, in my opinion, be likely to fail.

On the French side, Drouyn de Lhuys was negotiating for diplomatic recognition of Maximilian as the *quid pro quo* for French withdrawal. Bigelow broached the subject on October 19, by asking the French foreign minister whether a "formal recognition" of Maximilian's government "would enable the Archduke to dispense with a foreign army?" Drouyn replied that "[U.S.] recognition" would greatly facilitate and hasten the retirement of France from Mexico." Bigelow reported that some financial remuneration might speed up French withdrawal, particularly "some security for their debts." With some prospect of recouping the fortunes Napoleon III had already expended, Drouyn de Lhuys thought "there would be no difficulty about their retiring promptly."[39] Bigelow knew that he had gone out on a diplomatic limb. He now had an indication from a high

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[38] Bigelow to Seward, 8/21/1865 cited in, *Retrospectives*, p. 152.
[39] Bigelow to Seward, 10/19/1865 in Ibid. pp. 200-201.

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authority that the French were on the verge of getting out of Mexico, and were merely casting around for ways to cut their losses.

Bigelow queried Seward as to whether or not the recognition of Maximilian would be too high a price to pay for the imminent realization of Seward's policy. Expressing his doubts about his initiative, he wrote to Seward:

> Perhaps I have committed an indiscretion in allowing myself, by discussing it [diplomatic recognition of Maximilian] to give that much encouragement to the idea that our recognition of Maximilian was possible upon any terms; if so, please say so as bluntly as you please, or, if it suits you better, say nothing. I am under no obligation to renew the subject and neglected no proper precautions against leaving the impression that I spoke of any inspiration from home.[40]

In twentieth century parlance, Bigelow had floated a "trial balloon." Coupled with other intelligence and his own analysis, Bigelow's reports were useful in letting Seward know that, from a source very close to the emperor, it was no longer a matter of "if" but merely of "when" insofar as the withdrawal of French troops from Mexico was concerned. Seward could see diplomatic victory on the horizon, and he was not about to sell out Juárez for the sake of impatience. He would not betray the Mexican republican patriot, and told Bigelow so in early November:

> The United States have hitherto practiced the utmost frankness on that subject [recognition of Maximilian] . . . They [the U.S.] still regard the effort to establish permanently a foreign and imperial government in Mexico as disallowable and impracticable.[41]

The interpretive problem posed by this latter quote is that Seward appeared to be doing what he felt was best for republican Mexico under Juárez. Juárez himself and his emissary to Washington Romero were actively seeking the armed conflict that Seward

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[40] Ibid., p. 203.
[41] Seward to Bigelow, 11/6/1865, DR, Instructions, France, M77, R57.

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was trying to avoid. It can be argued that the Mexican government always viewed the Schofield enterprise as an essentially "Mexican" initiative. This explains Romero's willingness to offer such high compensation to an American general and his immediate staff. Mexico would take advantage of whatever expertise and materiel the U.S. officers could commandeer, but it would not be an invading American army *a la* Mexican-American war. It would be a liberation army in which Mexicans would do most of the fighting, led by both U.S. and Mexican officers. In all probability, the working out of such fine distinctions would have been nightmarish had the force ever actually gone into battle.

At about the same time as this communication, Schofield was cleared by Seward to leave for Europe. Schofield may have looked on his personal role in the upcoming negotiations with Napoleon III as portentous, but Seward's real thoughts about the general's diplomatic importance is contained in the following to Bigelow:

> General Schofield proceeds to Paris. He is, I believe, fully informed of the feelings and sentiments, not only of this Government, but of the American people. I commend him to your confidence and authorize you to communicate with him whenever occasion shall require.[42]

It took Schofield two more weeks to get a ship out of New York, and he did not arrive in Paris by way of London until December 2, 1865. After his long wait to discharge his diplomatic trust, Schofield found that Napoleon III was not in Paris, but at his country estate in Compiegne. When U.S. Admiral Charles Goldsborough, at port in southern France, heard of the General's presence in France, he wrote to Minister Bigelow seeking information. Bigelow's reply echoed Seward's note:

> General Schofield is charged with no communication for this or for any other European Government. His eminence as a soldier and the intimate relations of

[42] "Confidential" letter from Seward to Bigelow, 11/4/1865 cited in Bigelow, *Retrospections, vol. III,* p. 218.

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confidence which are known to subsist between him and the President give a natural and just importance to his presence in Europe at the present time.[43]

Meanwhile, there was a good deal of substantive correspondence going on between the State Department and the French Foreign Ministry precisely relating to matters in Schofield's brief. Unfortunately for the general, he was privy to none of it. In the course of the Bigelow-Seward-Drouyn de Lhuys conversation, Seward became convinced that no overt threats to the French would be required and that no invasion would be necessary to get the French to leave. He was certain that Napoleon III would not engage in a war with the U.S. to save Maximilian.

There is no indication in Seward's official correspondence to Bigelow in Paris that he knew of reports being sent to Napoleon III in the fall of 1865 by the French military commander in Mexico, Achille Bazaine. Bazaine described the deteriorating situation there, and Maximilian's inability to deal with it. The Emperor wrote to Bazaine that Maximilian had to "bring some order to the finances and to the main transport routes." He went on to say that it would be easier for France to abandon a government that had "done nothing to support itself than to support it in spite of itself."[44]

In his uniform, Schofield would make an intimidating presence in Paris, but only one designed to underscore decisions already taken on both sides of the Atlantic. By the time Schofield set foot in France in December, Seward could already discern the outlines of his diplomatic victory. Schofield made his presence known in his first public statement in December at an "American Thanksgiving" dinner in Paris at which he was but one of several speakers. In his remarks he praised the "demobilization" effort that had followed the Civil War. He proposed a toast that "will be heartily responded to by every true American – the old friendship between France and United States: may it be strengthened and perpetuated!"[45]

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[43] Ibid., p. 267.
[44] Quoted in Cunningham, *Mexico and the Foreign Policy of Napoleon III*, p. 184.
[45] Schofield, *Forty-Six Years*, p. 387.

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Could these be the words of the general who six months earlier had been chosen to forcibly evict the French from Mexico, the general handpicked by Grant and approved by Romero? Not only had his absence delayed any invasion for six months to a year, but now he was also in Paris praising the French and celebrating ancient ties of friendship. He was emphasizing the importance of the rapid mustering out process taking place in the Union army, making no mention of those who would have to be "mustered in" if Mexico was to be invaded. This was precisely the result Seward had wanted.

As a result of his direct experience in Paris, and perhaps without realizing it himself, Schofield had come to many of the same conclusions that Seward had held for some time. Schofield called the situation in Napoleon III's government "extremely critical." What had kept Napoleon going was his devotion to French "honor" and the realization that Napoleon could not have submitted to military defeat in Mexico "without the loss of his throne." In a sentence that could have been written by Seward himself, Schofield concluded, "forcible intervention by the American people in the Mexican question, or the public threat of such action, arousing the national pride of France, must have led to a long and bloody war, resulting doubtless, in final success in America and probably in a revolution in France."[46] What follows in the text of his speech makes it perfectly clear that Schofield meant the "final success of America, i.e. American forces" and that he fully expected that France would have lost any armed struggle. This is not unreasonable in light of the fact that just six months earlier, he would have been the one taking credit for France's defeat. Yet Schofield's transformation from a devotee of Grant and Romero to an advocate of Seward's non-interventionism is nonetheless remarkable. In his memoir, Schofield asked rhetorically:

> Why make enemies of our ancient friends? Our sister republic of Mexico must be relieved from foreign domination, at whatever cost; but strife and lasting

[46] Ibid., p. 387.

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enmity between the United States and France would be a fearful price to pay for even so great a good as the freedom of Mexico.[47]

The irony in all of this, of course, is the fact that Schofield, who was supposed to "get his feet under Napoleon's mahogany," never did. After pondering Bazaine's reports and the messages transmitted to him from Seward by way of Minister Bigelow, Napoleon III unilaterally decided to announce in January 1866 that the French expedition in Mexico had succeeded. The legal basis for Napoleon III's decision was the Treaty of Miramar (1864) that had officially set into motion the Maximilian enterprise and delineated mutual financial responsibilities. Maximilian would not have been in a position to live up to the Treaty's onerous financial terms even at the time of its signing in 1864. To think he could have done so after two years of constant warfare was ludicrous. Napoleon III simply seized on this convenient pretext to lie to his parliament and the French people about the outcome of his initiative in Mexico.

Had Schofield's presence in Paris in the month leading up to Napoleon III's decision made any difference? It is, of course, impossible to say. Schofield had met with Napoleon III's son and had made the rounds of various Parisian salons, where he spouted the "party line" given him by Seward at their summer meeting in Cape May. At this stage, however, Maximilian's coffin already had a number of nails firmly embedded. Schofield may have been just one more. Schofield was, in fact, present for the January 22, 1866 speech to the legislature, in which Napoleon III announced French withdrawal. The ostensible reason for Schofield's presence in Paris had been achieved without the general ever having to confront Napoleon III directly.

After reporting to Washington on Napoleon's speech, Schofield took off on a long vacation to southern France, Italy, Switzerland and England. By virtue of Seward's scheme, Schofield had avoided battlefield danger in the daunting landscape of northern Mexico. His reputation remained untainted by troubles that might have awaited him

[47] Ibid. p. 388.

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there. He was nominated to succeed Stanton as Secretary of War in June 1868 and became Superintendent of West Point from 1876 until 1881. Not only had Seward gotten him out of the way at a most critical time, thus derailing Grant and Romero's invasion plans, but it also appears he helped Schofield's career in the bargain. Were the diplomatic assignment in Paris, the opportunity to work and visit in Europe after a brutal war in the U.S., and the risk-free nature of these assignments, enough to compensate Schofield for the $100,000 he never earned in Mexico? Schofield may have reminded himself that the very reason that the French were in Mexico, at least superficially, was because Mexico did not pay its debts. Schofield may have viewed the plumb assignment in Paris (which probably paid him close to the going rate of $1000 a month for a U.S. Minister), as better recompense than the $10,000 Romero was offering in advance, with the remaining $90,000 due upon successfully ousting the French and Maximilian. That would have doubly been the case if the $90,000 took the form of Mexican land, and not American dollars.

Understandably, Romero was not so pleased. As soon as heard about Schofield's assignment to France, he detected the fine hand of his main adversary in the State Department. Writing on August 4, 1865, Romero reported to his government that "Seward desires to undo the arrangement [U.S. led invasion] by flattering Schofield with a mission to France." He continued, citing Schofield's naivete, "unfortunately, Schofield does not recognize Seward's real purpose in the present case."[48]

Romero continued to plot with Grant for the remainder of the year, but eventually realized his gambit was essentially over. If the French were willing to leave voluntarily, Grant saw no reason to squander political capital or risk soldiers in a needless undertaking. Grant had nothing to gain and much to lose by continuing to promote an armed intervention. In Paris, Schofield sounded more like Seward in Washington than a

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[48] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, August 4, 1865, #377, vol. 5, pp 530-31; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 90.

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general ready to lead a charge. Moreover, the American troops massed under Sheridan along the Rio Grande could not be kept there indefinitely. A number of border incidents had already threatened the tenuous peace between these soldiers and Maximilian's supporters.[49] If Napoleon III did not want a war, starting one, perhaps inadvertently, would serve no purpose. Seward's policy of what Bigelow called "simple forbearance" appeared to be carrying the day.[50]

But the devil would be in the details. Announcing withdrawal in Paris was one thing; actually getting French troops out of Mexico would be another. Moreover, some political cover had to be arranged that would serve French honor. Leaving Mexico because Maximilian could not pay his bills was not consistent with the image of French "*gloire*" that Napoleon III had been trying to broadcast throughout the world. There would be endless recriminations in France about who was to blame for the fiasco. Military reputations and careers would be shattered. How could Mexican peasants rout the French army, the descendents of Napoleon I's *Grande Armée*? Would the army's effectiveness against the menacing Prussians be eroded? How could Benito Juárez, a Zapotec Indian, have frustrated the hopes of renewing "Latin culture" in the New World? Did this now mean that the Monroe Doctrine had been vindicated, even though Seward had never used the term in his official correspondence? Would all the European powers henceforth have to defer to the United States in the Western Hemisphere? These were but a few of the questions and problems resulting from Napoleon III's decision. But the most pressing problem that soon faced both the U.S. and the European powers would turn on the fate of Maximilian himself.

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[49] Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs, vol. II*, pp. 214-17.
[50] Bigelow, *Retropsectives, vol. III*, p. 155.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SEWARD AND THE EXECUTION OF MAXIMILIAN

In late 1866 Seward needed reliable information from the ground in Mexico yet had little. That was primarily due to the fact that U.S. Minister to Mexico Thomas Corwin had been away from his post for close to three years. The immediate problem for Corwin, and the long-term reporting problems for Seward, began when the French occupied Mexico City in the summer of 1863. Thomas Schoonover writes that Corwin's loyalties shifted from Juárez's Liberals to Maximilian shortly thereafter, possibly for financial reasons.[1] Corwin had decided not to follow Juárez into exile, opting to stay in Mexico City before returning to the U.S. on extended leave of absence, departing prior to Maximilian and Carlota's arrival in Mexico in June 1864. His son, William H. Corwin, undertook his father's administrative duties and also did some political reporting. In the interim, two replacements for Corwin, General John Logan and Lewis D. Campbell had been nominated by President Johnson and approved by the Senate. However, neither established residency in Mexico, so for roughly three years the U.S. had no Minister there.

This lack of ministerial representation raised questions, and Romero started pressuring friendly congressmen to introduce resolutions in the House pertaining to Seward's handling of Mexican affairs. In short, if republican Mexico was so important, why could a U.S. diplomat not be found who would go to wherever Juárez happened to be? Mexican Minister Matías Romero drafted a resolution to be presented by his Radical friend Godlove Orth of Indiana that concerned matters of diplomatic recognition. One purpose of the resolution was to question whether Corwin had been colluding with the French prior to his departure. Both Orth and Romero considered it insensitive to introduce the resolution once Corwin died suddenly in mid-December, 1865, concluding

[1] Thomas Schoonover, *Dollars Over Dominion,* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U. Press, 1978, p. 175.

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"no reason exists now to reveal his labor in favor of Maximilian, nor would it appear noble to do so."[2]

In contrast to his lack of information regarding Mexico, Seward could base his actions towards the European powers on good reporting from his diplomats there. Ministers Charles Francis Adams in London and John Bigelow in Paris were outstanding in the quality and timeliness of their reports. Minister Resident to Brussels Henry Sanford was very good at providing a wider range of European perspectives. Given the time lags attendant to all diplomatic correspondence before the transatlantic cable came into use in 1866, it was hard for any Secretary of State or Foreign Minister to know what was transpiring in anything close to real time.

In the case of the Juárez government, it was practically impossible. Historian Frank Knapp noted that the problems experienced by Seward were at least as severe for the Juárez government. In his biography of Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, Juárez's successor as president and member of the Juárez cabinet throughout this period, he notes that correspondence traveled to the U.S. from Chihuahua to Franklin, Texas, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, Kansas City, Missouri and finally to Washington, D.C. Official letters took from one to two months to make the trip, if they arrived at all.[3] Seward did have reports from the ten or so consuls accredited to Mexico, but they concerned themselves primarily with commercial matters.[4] Seward needed someone on the ground with overall responsibility for political reporting.

General John Logan, the first nominee to replace Corwin, received his commission as Minister to Mexico a few weeks before Corwin's death and was chosen specifically to underline U.S. military potential in the region. Logan was a fighter, not a compromiser, who advocated going to war with France over Mexico. In his interview

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[2] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, Dec. 19, 1865, #671, vol. V, p. 907; see also Thomas Schoonover, *Mexican Lobby*, Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1986, p. 113.
[3] Frank Knapp, *The Life of Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, 1823-1889*, Austin, U. of Texas Press, 1951, pp. 90-98.
[4] M. Lane in Veracruz and Marcus Otterbourg in Mexico City, for example.

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before the Cabinet he reportedly stated that he would accept the assignment with the proviso that the U.S. government "would assure him of a change in policy whereby the United States would aid the Juarist forces in expelling Maximilian and in restoring the republic."[5] He had been a Congressman from Illinois and was confident of Congressional support for his nomination. Yet his friends cautioned him that he might never be able to function in his ministerial capacity, because of the peripatetic nature of the Juárez government. Commenting on a dinner conversation with Logan on December 14, 1865 Romero reported to his government that the general would turn down the job:

> Logan clearly does not wish to see the Mexican question reduced to the efforts or caprice of a single man. If the government was not disposed to face and treat the issue as it merits, he [Logan] added, the minister who attempted to follow his own judgment would appear ridiculous . . . Logan has spoken with Seward, but the secretary of state's views have not satisfied him.[6]

To serve as U.S. Minister to the republican government of Benito Juárez was not going to be easy for anyone, even a U.S. army general. Juárez had no fixed capital, and arriving at his reported residence, Chihuahua, entailed an arduous overland trip through the northern desert. The physical discomfort alone attendant to the assignment was daunting. Logan had to be aware that his nomination was a Johnson Administration answer to growing Congressional criticism that too little diplomatic attention had been paid to Mexico since the conclusion of the Civil War. As an army general, he must have known of the Schofield mission to Paris, and how Seward was capable of using military officers for diplomatic show rather than substance. He may have been expressing to Romero over dinner the fact that he did not want to travel thousands of miles only to advance the political agenda of Johnson and Seward. Whatever the case, General Logan

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[5] Martin H. Hall, "The Campbell-Sherman Diplomatic Mission to Mexico," *Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, XIII*, October, 1955, p. 255.

[6] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, Dec. 14, 1865, #652, vol. V, pp. 891-2; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 112.

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opted out.[7] A new emissary to Mexico was found in the person of Lewis D. Campbell, another Whig from Ohio, who would not be confirmed by the Senate until May 1866.

However, before Seward could focus on the Campbell assignment, he had several other more pressing matters requiring his attention. The first was to bolster the political fortunes of his superior, President Johnson, and the moderates in the Republican Party. By the summer of 1866 Radical Republicans were gaining ascendancy in national politics and Johnson was progressively seen as a compromiser at best, a Copperhead at worst.[8] To counter this impression, Johnson concocted the idea of a "whistlestop" tour whereby he could present his case directly to the electorate. To add luster to the occasion, he invited a number of luminaries along, and charged Seward with orchestrating the entire enterprise.[9] "The Swing Around the Circle," as it became known, was described by Seward biographer Glyndon Van Deusen as "a campaign tour designed to promote the election of Congressmen who would support [President] Johnson and his policies."[10]

The "Swing" had several other purposes. In order to show his sympathy for Mexico, Minister Romero was among the invitees, and was trotted out dutifully whenever it was deemed politic to pledge U.S. support for Juárez and enmity for the French and Maximilian. In his hometown of Auburn, New York, Seward presented Romero to the assembled crowd as follows:

> This gentleman is Señor Romero, minister of the United States of Mexico. For Mexico's benefit and to prevent Mexico's destruction, the president of the United

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[7] Dean Mahin, *One War at a Time: The International Dimensions of the American Civil War*, Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2000, p. 274.

[8] Copperheads were northern Democrats who opposed the Civil War, Hans Trefousse, *The Radical Republicans: Lincoln's Vanguard for Racial Justice*, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969, pp. 311-12; see also D. P. Crook, *The North, the South, and the Powers 1861-1865*, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1974, pp. 280, 283.

[9] Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward*, p. 461; Welles, *Diary, vol. II*, 589. President Johnson and Seward were accompanied by Gen. Grant, Admiral Farragut, and Mexican Minister Romero, among many other prominent public figures, including Welles and members of his family. The "Swing" started in late August 1866 in Philadelphia, stopping in New York, Albany, Niagara, Chicago, St. Louis and Louisville returning to Washington by way of Pittsburgh, Harrisburg and Baltimore.

[10] Ibid., p. 461.

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> States had given notification that the foreign intervention will have to cease by this coming November [1866].[11]

The "Swing" started to unravel for Johnson in Cleveland, where instead of remaining on the high road, he started down the low road of responding in kind to hecklers. Rumors of hard drinking among the official party surfaced, aimed particularly at Johnson, Seward and Grant. Radical Republicans in Chicago saw that Johnson was accorded no official reception, even though the dedication of a statue to Stephen Douglas in Chicago was the ostensible reason for the trip.[12] More depressing for Johnson was the fact that Grant and Romero generated the greatest enthusiasm among the crowds as the "Swing" progressed. Feeling that the president was manipulating them for partisan political purposes, members of the official party, among them Grant and Romero, found reasons to leave before the "Swing's" conclusion.

According to Welles, Seward almost died "of an attack of cholera" returning to Washington from the "Swing" and was moved to a special railway car between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg. Welles reported that Seward's attending physician, Dr. Norris, "was apprehensive he might not survive the night."[13] Seward apparently thought that he was dying as well, and said to President Johnson:

> My mind is clear, and I wish to say at this time that your course is right, that I have felt it my duty to sustain you in it, and if my life is spared, I will continue to do so. Pursue it for the sake of the country; it is correct.[14]

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[11] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, Sept. 2, 1866, #594, vol. 8, pp. 235-7; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 137.

[12] Howard K. Beale insists that there is no evidence for Johnson's alleged chronic insobriety. He says that Johnson was probably drunk when he gave his infamous speech to the Senate on the occasion of Lincoln's second inauguration, but he was recovering from typhoid fever. Beale maintains that a glass of whiskey given to Johnson by a friend in the Senate just before the speech had an inordinate effect on his weakened system. Howard K. Beale, "Johnson and His Policy," in Eric McKitrick, *Andrew Johnson: A Profile*, pp. 79-80, especially *n*, p. 80.

[13] Welles, *Diary*, p. 594.

[14] Welles, *Diary*, p. 595.

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Seward's beloved daughter Fanny was called for in the expectation that he would not make it to Washington. The sixty-five year old Seward turned out to be much more resilient than the twenty-two year old Fanny, who died of tuberculosis later that October. He was devastated by her death, but his ability to continue to deal with weighty diplomatic matters amidst crises in his personal life was astonishing.

The "Swing" had proven to be a fiasco. Biographer Hans Trefousse, while generally sympathetic to Johnson, notes simply that the electoral style that had worked well for Johnson in Tennessee was disastrous under the circumstances of the "Swing." Johnson gave impassioned "stump" speeches, laced with Biblical references. When heckled, he took on his hecklers. Instead of appearing courageous, he appeared petulant and not the least bit presidential. The rumors of hard drinking among certain members of the party were resurrected, notably those relating to Grant, Romero left early, pleading sickness, and Seward almost died from cholera. Politically, the "Swing" had just the opposite effect of what Johnson intended.[15] In September 1865, Seward did not have time to dwell on the "Swing," for Napoleon III seemed to reneging on his promise to begin withdrawing French troops in November.

The initial three-phase plan had been communicated to Seward by the French Minister to Washington, the Marquis de Montholon, in April 1866, and was the basis for Seward's belief that the French would be out of Mexico soon and that no U.S. military action would be necessary. Seward expected that there would be considerable jockeying about terms and the role of Maximilian, but was nonetheless convinced that once begun in November, French withdrawal would soon become a *fait accompli*. Bigelow had been reporting since 1863 on the strain that supporting French actions in Mexico was putting on the national treasury.[16] It was this belief that sustained Seward's efforts to buy time in the summer of 1866 to deflect Grant and Romero's call for armed intervention.

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[15] Hans Trefousse, *Andrew Johnson: A Biography*, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1989, pp. 262-67.
[16] Bigelow to Seward, October 9, 1863, in John Bigelow, *Retrospections of an Active Life, vol. II*, NY: The Baker and Taylor Co., 1909, pp. 80-1.

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Thus Seward's dismay and anger are understandable when he received a dispatch from Bigelow in November saying the Napoleon III had experienced a change of heart.[17] The mid-term elections had not gone well for the Republicans, and Democrats and Radical Republicans demanding decisive action in Mexico were in the ascendancy. Seward had been accused of weakness and vacillation in his dealings with Napoleon III over Mexico, and Napoleon's altering the withdrawal agreement would increase that criticism.

Bigelow reported that the new French Foreign Minister, the Marquis de Moustier, who had replaced Drouyn de Lhuys, had confirmed a newspaper report that Napoleon III wanted to have all French troops leave in March 1867, instead of in three groups over a year beginning in November 1866. Napoleon III claimed that maybe Washington had not been informed by a bureaucratic oversight. Bigelow immediately sensed the political fallout in the U.S. such a unilateral decision would have. He knew that those clamoring for an invasion of Mexico to oust the French would seize on this proof of Napoleon III's duplicity to make their case.

Bigelow arranged for a meeting with Napoleon III to ascertain firsthand the accuracy of Moustier's report.[18] The French Emperor said it was true, but that there was no political motivation behind his decision, and that it had been "influenced entirely by military considerations." Napoleon III went on to say that the "successes of the dissidents [Juáristas], supported as they were by large re-enforcements [sic] from the United States, seemed to render any reduction of his force there perilous to those remaining behind." Bigelow said that Napoleon III emphasized that his message to his military commander Bazaine had not been sent in code, and in so doing, assumed the U.S. was aware of his thinking. He also said that his personal representative, General Henri Castelnau, told Maximilian that "France could not give him another cent of money or another man."

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[17] Bigelow to Seward, November 8, 1866, in Ibid., p. 599.
[18] Ibid., p. 599.

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Bigelow said that Castelnau transmitted to Maximilian the Emperor's advice that he abdicate. When asked if any of this information had been transmitted to the U.S., Napoleon III replied that:

> He did not know; that M. de Moustier ought to have done so; that, as these events occurred during the interim of a change in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was possible that it had been neglected, though his telegram to Marshall Bazaine was purposely sent in a way to show that there was nothing in his plans to disguise.[19]

Bigelow then pointed out to the Emperor the "grave inconveniences" that could stem from "any unexplained departure from stipulations already given in his Majesty's name to the world." Bigelow then went on to justify such an unvarnished presentation to Napoleon III on the grounds that the French and Maximilian had had some recent successes in Mexico, and the "turbulent" state of our politics at home might "awaken suspicions in the United States which might seriously prejudice the relations of the two countries."[20]

Seward brought the matters raised in Bigelow's message to a special cabinet meeting on November 22, 1866.[21] Gideon Welles wrote:

> Seward was in fidgets. A dispatch from John Bigelow, our Minister, says the embarkation of the French troops is postponed till spring. This step was taken some weeks since, but we had not been consulted or notified. In the mean time Seward, anticipating the departure of the French troops, has sent out his Minister [Campbell] with Lieutenant-General Sherman for a State Department triumph in

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[19] Bigelow to Seward, Nov. 8, 1866, quoted in Bigelow, *Retrospections, vol. 3,* p. 599.

[20] By the end of August 1866, French commander Achille Bazaine had removed most French troops from the north, and focused on defending the southern two-thirds of Mexico. His forces, under General Prieto, had a victory against the Juáristas at Juchitan, but did not follow up. It was the only minor victory in a fall otherwise marked by retrenchments and outright defeats, Jack Dabbs, *The French Army in Mexico 1861-1867,* The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1963, p. 181.

[21] The fact that Seward was able to present Bigelow's message to the cabinet in two weeks was probably due the fact that cable service was now in effect from Halifax to Washington, D.C. It cannot be proven, but in all likelihood the message was sent by steamer from France to Halifax, then transmitted to Washington by cable.

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> re-establishing the Mexican Republic . . . The President and Seward, I saw, were ready to take decisive measures. Seward was full of palaver, -- had many things to say that were nothing . . . Seward read a thunder-and-lightning dispatch, a sort of ultimatum, full of menace and monitions in every respect, as a telegram.[22]

The telegram did not get sent in its original form. Most of the Cabinet felt that the telegram was too strongly worded in its first draft, and suggested that it be rewritten.

The Cabinet met again the following day to continue discussion of the issue. President Johnson had invited General Grant because Seward's telegram would explicitly make reference to General Sheridan's troops on the border. Interior Secretary Orville Browning, absent from the previous day's cabinet meeting, said that the telegram was an "ultimatum."[23] According to Welles, the others laughed because the new message was considerably toned down from the original.

The approved version was sent in code via transatlantic cable and, according to Bigelow, "was the first and the longest as well as the most momentous, perhaps, that has yet ever crossed the Atlantic by telegraph, and . . .as it came in cipher . . .the most expensive dispatch for its number of words that to this day has ever reached Europe from the State Department."[24] The text took over a day to arrive and reportedly cost the U.S. $13,000, and cost Bigelow "corresponding anxiety."[25] Seward approved of Bigelow's approach and cited the "embarrassment" produced by Napoleon III's decision, exacerbated "immeasurably" by the fact that the decision was taken "without conference with, and even without notice to, the United States."[26] He denied that the U.S. had provided the "re-enforcements" to which Napoleon III referred, and said that the U.S.

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[22] Welles, *Diary, vol.. II,* p. 622.
[23] Ibid., p. 624.
[24] Bigelow, *Retrospections, vol. 3,* p. 611.
[25] To get some perspective on the cost, a U.S. Minister serving in a U.S. legation overseas received $12,000 per year. The State Department lists the highest pay for a current Foreign Service Officer at $124,534, www.state.gov/m/dghr/pay/8047pf.htm. Using the rough equivalent of a factor of ten, the cable would have cost c. $130,000 in U.S. currency in 2003. Bigelow cites the cost and his own "corresponding anxiety" in Ibid., p. 611.
[26] Seward to Bigelow via telegram, 11/23/1866 in Bigelow, *Retrospections, vol. 3,* pp. 609-11

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would have been unaware of any French telegram sent to French commander Bazaine, even if it had not been encoded. Essentially Napoleon III had intimated that the U.S. would have known about the change through intelligence intercepts of his telegrams to Bazaine. Somewhat sanctimoniously, Seward countered, "We consult only official communications to ascertain the purposes and resolutions of France, as we make our own purposes and resolutions known only in the same manner where she is concerned." He went on:

> But the Emperor's decision to modify the existing arrangement without any understanding with the United States, so as to leave the whole French army in Mexico for the present instead of withdrawing one detachment in November current [1866], as promised, is now found in every way inconvenient and exceptionable. We cannot acquiesce.

Seward then listed the reasons. Napoleon III said that all the French troops would be withdrawn "next spring," and for Seward that was "indefinite and vague." Secondly, Seward maintained that Congress and the American people would not understand the reason for the delay. He alluded to, but did not explain directly to Napoleon, the high political cost the Johnson Administration would have to pay if France reneged on its timetable for withdrawal. Seward's third point was that such a delay would disrupt the mission to Mexico of Minister Campbell and General Sherman, about to be undertaken "to confer with President Juárez on subjects which are deeply interesting to the United States and of vital importance to Mexico." The "ultimatum" part, to which Browning objected, consisted of the following instructions to Bigelow:

> You will . . . state to the Emperor's government that the President sincerely hopes and expects that the evacuation of Mexico will be carried into effect with such conformity to the existing agreement as the inopportune complication which calls for this despatch shall allow. Mr. Campbell will be advised of that complication.

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> Instructions will be issued to the United States military forces of observation [Sheridan's forces] to await in every case special directions from the President.

Consistent with his approach all along, Seward finished by asserting that the U.S. "desire nothing more earnestly than to preserve peace and friendship with France." However, after underlining the importance of Franco-American friendship, Seward concluded that not informing the U.S. of the change in plans was not an oversight:

> Nor does the President allow himself to doubt that what has been determined in France, most inauspiciously, as we think, has been decided upon inadvertently, without full reflection upon the embarrassment it must produce here. . .

The amazing thing is that Bigelow chose not to deliver immediately the world's most expensive telegram to the Foreign Ministry. Bigelow wrote that because of the length of the message, the telegraph office was tied up for more than a day, and many foreign diplomats began asking him about what was contained in such a lengthy transmission. Bigelow decided "to leave the tenor of this transatlantic communication to the imagination rather than to the loose tongues of those whom it might concern."[27] Bigelow, a favorite of Seward's, seemed to be breaking the trust involved in his diplomatic assignment by not immediately transmitting the U.S. position to Napoleon III.

However Bigelow, along with Welles, thought there might be a domestic political motive for the harsh words. The next steamship to arrive in France from New York carried the text of the message in the *New York Herald* for the whole world to see. Bigelow assumed that the telegram "was written for Congress rather than for the Tuileries."[28] Clearly Seward had leaked the message to the *Herald*. The only reason to do that would be to gain domestic political advantage, and begin building a consensus in support of the administration before Napoleon III had time to read and respond to the message itself.

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[27] Ibid., p. 612.
[28] Ibid., p. 612.

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Welles suspected political motives in Seward's burst of activity relating to the telegram. Welles knew that the administration's defeat in the recent elections had "greatly disappointed Seward, and as he has little faith in political principles, popular intelligence, or public virtue, he resorts to expedients, and if they fail, he becomes depressed."[29] Welles also thought that Seward was not telling the rest of the Cabinet everything. The fact that he had leaked the text of the telegram to the *Herald* might have been one of those things.

> I am mistaken if there is not much shambling statesmanship in this Mexican demonstration. If I am not in error, there have been some steps taken of which most of us are not advised. The condition of things does not suit me, though, as Seward says, France has trouble and cannot afford to go to war with us. I would not tempt or dare her unnecessarily.[30]

Even though Bigelow did not deliver the message officially, word of it traveled widely once the *Herald's* account of it was translated. Bigelow maintained that his strategy paid off when the opposition questioned Napoleon III's Minister of State, Eugene Rouher, about the *New York Herald's* report of the bellicose nature of Seward's demands in the *Corps législatif.* Rouher responded that Napoleon III's government had "received no such dispatch from the United States Legation."[31] France had not been officially insulted because the official message had not been transmitted. However, the gist of the message carried in the *Herald* had nonetheless communicated that the U.S. was completely serious about wanting the French out of Mexico, and that Seward had just about run out of patience. It is impossible to say whether or not Seward knew in advance that Bigelow would not deliver the actual text, thus keeping the issue from becoming official. It cannot be denied that sending the longest and most expensive telegram to date was a theatrical diplomatic move.

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[29] Welles, *Diary, vol. II,* p. 626.
[30] Ibid. p. 626.
[31] Bigelow, *Retropections, vol. 3,* p. 612.

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The argument that Seward's telegram may have just have been such an exercise in diplomatic bluster, designed to rattle the French, is bolstered by a telegram sent to Paris by Seward a few days after the long one under discussion.[32] It had two parts, the first of which said that General Sheridan was reporting that American troops had reportedly crossed the Texas-Mexico border into Matamoros "on plea of preventing the pillage of Americans." Seward said that he, Secretary of War Stanton and General Sheridan would disapprove of the action and relieve the offending general of his command if the Chargés proved to be true.[33] Seward was disavowing use of U.S. military force, but the French had to be nervous that it might have already been used. This report of U.S. action on the border, authorized or not, coupled with Seward's earlier strong message, kept the pressure on Napoleon III to withdraw.

The second part of the message bordered on the disingenuous. Napoleon III had maintained in his November interview with Bigelow that he told Montholon, his Minister in Washington, about the change in plans. In this telegram a month later, Seward noted that Montholon "has now shown me a despatch of M. Moustier of the 15th of October last, and explained the reason for not giving me a copy of the same when received."[34] So Seward may have known about the change in French plans in October, but given the poor election results in November, he chose to display a warlike attitude towards France that would soften public and congressional criticism.

This view would be consistent with that of Welles, but Welles was frequently critical of Seward, particularly when it came to Mexico. It might explain why Bigelow would take it upon himself not to deliver the contents of Seward's warlike telegram, thinking that the whole endeavor was undertaken primarily for political effect in the U.S. Bigelow knew that the same effect would be achieved through the newspaper account, and would not force France to take an official position. This episode is consistent with

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[32] Telegram, Seward to Bigelow, Nov., 30, 1866, in *Retrospections, vol. 3,* pp. 615-16.
[33] Sheridan, *Memoirs, vol. II,* pp. 221-23.
[34] Telegram, Seward to Bigelow, Nov. 30, 1866, cited in Bigelow, *Retrospections, vol 3,* p. 616.

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Seward's two-pronged approach of not forcing France's hand by directly insulting her honor, while at the same time ratcheting up the pressure with the implied threat of U.S. military action.

A message from Moustier in Paris to Montholon in Washington was re-transmitted through Bigelow via cable on December 3, 1866 so that Seward could see its contents translated into English. It said that the reason for the change in the French position was transmitted via Montholon to Seward on October 16, and that "the latter had appeared satisfied with the declarations that had been made by our representative." According to Moustier, Seward had acknowledged the message, at least verbally. Moustier's telegram continued in a conciliatory vein, noting that the reason for the change had been essentially that communicated to Bigelow by Napoleon III in November, namely the fear that a divided French force would be decimated by the Juáristas. Moustier told Seward that the decision had been based on "military considerations," and that France fully intended to repatriate her troops in March.[35] France was not trying to prolong her presence in Mexico. Quite the contrary, it wanted to get everyone out as quickly as possible under the safest conditions, even if that meant abandoning Maximilian. Shortly thereafter, this is exactly what France did. Assuming that that neither Moustier, the French Foreign Minister, or Montholon, France's Minister in Washington, were lying, then this telegraphic exchange reinforces the idea that Seward may have known about changes in the French plan and conveniently chose to forget them when it was politic to do so.

This episode reminds one of historian David Donald's characterization of Seward as acting a little mad, as had been the case on several occasions early in the Lincoln Administration.[36] Had he consciously raised the diplomatic pressure on France by

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[35] French Minister of Foreign Affairs Moustier to French Minister in Washington, the Marquis de Montholon, October 16, 1866 quoted in Bigelow to Seward, December 3, 1866 in *Retrospections*, vol. III, pp. 617-18.

[36] See note # 11, Chapter 3, p. 95.

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issuing a long telegram that was never officially delivered, but obviously leaked to the press? Was spending all that money for a communication of which the whole diplomatic corps in France was aware, but which remained secret for days, basically an exercise in theatricality to get his point across? Was the mention in an ensuing telegram that a U.S. general may have invaded Mexico designed to show Napoleon III just how close confrontation between French and U.S. forces might be? These activities in November 1866, which included the embarkation of the new Minister to Mexico, Lewis D. Campbell, accompanied by General William Sherman, were key elements in making sure that France kept its word about leaving Mexico. Within four months, the French would be gone, within seven, Maximilian. Seward was about to see his carefully thought out strategy in Mexico culminate in success.

Seward said he would explain the reason why Montholon never showed him a copy of the message detailing the proposed change in the French timetable for withdrawal. In subsequent cables, he never did, and the question remains whether or not Seward had known of French plans since October, but decided to make an issue of the change for political reasons in late November. In December 1866, Seward could not be sure the Napoleon III would honor his word. Hence, while the new transatlantic cable was busy with the hum of traffic between the U.S. and France, Minister Campbell and General Sherman were still trying to make headway on the ground in Mexico.

Although confirmed in May 1866, Campbell did not leave for Mexico until five months later. Part of the reason for this delay was that President Johnson wanted to underscore the potential use of the U.S. military to oust the French by having General Grant accompany Campbell when he presented his credentials to Juárez. Grant in Mexico would send an unmistakable message to Napoleon III, and by extension to

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Maximilian, Austria, and Belgium that the time for the polite exchange of diplomatic messages was coming to an end.[37]

A year earlier, Seward had used General Schofield to gently rattle the U.S. saber in Paris. Had Minister-to-Mexico designate General John Logan agreed to go to Mexico in December 1865, that would have rattled the saber a little more. Now Napoleon III would not be able to escape the noise when a top U.S. general accompanied Minister Lewis D. Campbell to his new assignment. Romero viewed Campbell's nomination as "equivalent to a new ratification on the Senate's part of the president's policy of continuing to recognize the national government of Mexico and further proof of adherence to the Monroe Doctrine."[38]

The diplomatic effect of a U.S. general accompanying the American Minister would be reinforced by Sheridan's "army of observation" on the Rio Grande. In that capacity, Sheridan had official sanction to wink and nod at a number of initiatives undertaken to help the republicans, mostly allowing them access to war materiel. His troops were rested and ready to go and the French had to be aware that they would be little better than cannon fodder should such a force link up with those already fighting for Juárez. In September of 1866, Sheridan visited U.S. troops in San Antonio and made a public show of asking about supplies should those troops find it necessary to move southward. He then went to Fort Duncan, just opposite the Mexican town of Piedras Negras on the Rio Grande, where he opened communications with Juárez, just over the border. Sheridan reported that he did all this for maximum public effect on Maximilian and the French troops. He explained that "the greatest significance was ascribed to my actions, it being reported most positively and with many specific details that I was only

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[37] Austria still had a few troops guarding Maximilian in his capacity as an Austrian prince. Belgium had also sent a contingent to support their princess Charlotte. As his relations with the French deteriorated, Maximilian and Charlotte occasionally entertained the fantasy that those two European powers would somehow replace the French, an idea that had no chance of becoming a reality. For approximate number at time of their departure from Mexico, see note #57, this chapter.

[38] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, May 6, 1866, #346, vol. 7, pp. 487-8; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 129-30.

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awaiting the arrival of the troops, then under marching orders in San Antonio, to cross the Rio Grande in behalf of the Liberal cause. Sheridan concluded that these "reports" and "demonstrations" frightened the "Imperialists" to the extent that they "withdrew the French and Austrian soldiers from Matamoras [sic], and practically abandoned the whole of northern Mexico as far down as Monterey [sic].[39] Disease had also taken its toll on the French troops, and maintaining supply lines in northeastern Mexico had proven particularly difficult.[40]

The cabinet was therefore rather surprised when Grant rather angrily refused to go. According to Gideon Welles, when the instructions to Grant were read to him during a cabinet meeting in October 1866, Grant said that "he did not think it expedient for him to go out of the country . . . The President was surprised and a little disconcerted."[41] President Johnson's reaction was understandable insofar as a military officer was refusing an order from his Commander-in-Chief. Welles went on to say that Grant suspected that Johnson had ulterior political motives for getting him out of the country. Johnson and Seward could not have overlooked the fact that Grant was much better received during the "Swing" than had been the President. With Grant gone, Johnson would have the possibility of replacing him as top Army commander with General William Sherman. Of course Johnson had the constitutional right to do that anyway, but he was already encountering a lot of opposition in Congress, where Grant was well liked. Firing Grant would complicate Johnson's political life in a way that sending him on a diplomatic mission would not.

Grant displayed his own growing sense of how the Washington political game was played by asking Sherman to go to Mexico in his stead. Writing to his brother, Senator John Sherman, General Sherman said that he had to undertake the Mexican assignment ". . . to escape a worse duty, and to save another person from a complication

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[39] Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs, vol II.*, p. 215-16.
[40] Dabbs, *French Army*, p. 180.
[41] Ibid., *vol. II*, p. 621.

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that should be avoided."[42] The "other person" was Grant and the "worse duty" would have been Grant's current job as Commander-in-Chief of the Army. Sherman considered the Commander-in-Chief post "political" and declared " I am determined to keep out of political, or even quasi-political office, and shall resign before being so placed, though I cannot afford to resign."[43] It is little wonder that Sherman's patience grew short as the Campbell-Sherman expedition evolved.

Welles had to provide a steamer once Campbell and Sherman were confirmed in their mission and the *Susquehanna* was put at their disposal. Welles, who mistrusted many, thought the mission "premature" because "the French have not left, and though from all accounts they are doing so, Louis Napoleon [Napoleon III] will not hesitate to break faith if it is for his interest."[44] In the same entry, Welles questioned Seward and Johnson's motives, characterizing the mission as "a political contrivance, such as Seward is fond of concocting for effect. A Radical Congress is about assembling [sic] after a succession of party triumphs, and he is afraid of it. The embassy is to draw off attention."[45]

As things turned out, Welles may have been right. Campbell and Sherman left for Mexico via Havana on November 10, 1866 [see map p. iv]. Campbell felt that he needed more information on the Mexican situation, and he went to Havana where he met with a number of people. U.S. consuls to Veracruz and Mexico City were also en route from the U.S. to Mexico via Havana on different ships, and Campbell chose to wait and consult with them there. Campbell then chose to wait for those consuls to arrive at their posts in order for them to transmit their impressions of the situation back to him in Havana.

In the interim, Campbell met with a former Confederate General, John B. Magruder, who had a message for Seward from the French commander in Mexico,

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[42] *The Sherman Letters: Correspondence Between General Sherman and Senator Sherman from 1837 to 1891*, ed. Rachel Sherman Thorndike, New York: Da Capo Press, 1969, p. 282
[43] William Sherman to John Sherman, Nov. 11, 1866 in Ibid., p. 282.
[44] Welles, *Diary, vol. II*, p. 622.
[45] Welles, *Diary, vol. II.*, p. 622.

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General Bazaine. The message cited "the moral influence wielded by the government of the United States" as the reason for the destruction of Maximilian's empire, and called for a joint U.S.-French force to maintain order. He suggested between ten and fifteen thousand U.S. forces in the north and a similar number of French troops in the south working together as a joint peace keeping force. Campbell forwarded this message to Seward on November 21, but no action was taken other than a reply acknowledging the overture.[46]

Campbell and Sherman finally reached the waters outside of Veracruz on November 29, almost three weeks after leaving New York. But Veracruz was in the hands of Maximilian's supporters and U.S. consul Lane reported to Campbell that there was no indication of any immediate change. Campbell and Sherman sailed north to Tampico, where Juáristas controlled the city. They disembarked and met with the Juáristas who informed the American representatives that Juárez was not in relatively nearby San Luis Potosi, but still in far away Chihuahua. Upon receiving this news, Sherman wrote to his brother, John, that Juárez was "way up in Chihuahua for no possible purpose other than to be where the Devil himself cannot get at him. I have not the remotest idea of riding on mule back a thousand miles in Mexico to find its chief magistrate."[47]

Campbell wrote to the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs that he wished to present his credentials as quickly as possible. As a former Congressman, Campbell knew that Congress would only be in session for approximately another three months, adjourning on March 4,1867, until the following December. If congressional action were to be necessary to aid the republican regime, necessary steps would have to be taken soon.[48] However, Sherman had already made his opposition clear about going to Chihuahua, and Campbell now followed his lead.

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[46] Campbell to Seward, November 21, 1866, DR, Despatches, Mexico, M97, R31, pp. 248-53.
[47] William Sherman to John Sherman, Dec. 7,1866, in *Sherman Letters*, p. 284.
[48] Martin Hall, "The Campbell-Sherman Diplomatic Mission to Mexico," p. 264.

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The *Susquehanna* left Mexican waters and arrived in Brownsville, Texas on December 7, just across the Rio Grande from Matamoros, where Campbell and Sherman caught up with U.S. General Sheridan. All three then met with Juárista general Mariano Escobedo, who controlled Matamoros, and who informed them that Juárez would soon be in Monterrey, not close, but still not as far as Chihuahua. Campbell chose to stay in Texas and make preparations to go overland to Monterrey to complete his mission, while Sherman took the *Susquehanna* home. By mid-December Campbell found out that Juárez was still in Chihuahua and had no immediate plans to leave. Frustrated, Campbell left for New Orleans, where he wrote to Seward at the end of 1866 that seeking to make personal contact with the Juárez government should wait until "its residence shall have been definitely established, and its authorities show, practically, some power and a greater disposition to enforce justice and to respect our flag."[49] Seward replied by telling Campbell to wait in New Orleans for further instructions.

Meanwhile, Maximilian vacillated. After several sessions with his advisors in late November 1866, he finally decided to stay in Mexico and try to fight it out against the Juáristas. Seward had a good reason for ordering the Campbell-Sherman delegation not to come ashore at Veracruz unless Maximilian officially abdicated. He did not want the U.S. to be seen as dictating the outcome of the struggle between Maximilian's forces and those of Juárez. His policy of neutrality towards France had worked up to this stage and there was no compelling reason to further sour relations with France. If Maximilian chose to try to stay in power, then matters would be decided on the battlefield, where Seward felt that Juárez would prevail, and the U.S. goal of maintaining republican Mexico would be achieved. Seward's carefully cultivated guise of U.S. neutrality toward Franco-Mexican affairs would remain intact.

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[49] Campbell to Seward, December 31, 1866, #7 or 8 (Campbell made initial mistakes in numbering his messages that were corrected subsequently), DR, Mexico, Despatches, pp. 291-95.

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Failure of the Campbell/Sherman mission did have negative elements. If Mexico descended into anarchy upon the departure of the French, Maximilian could be sacrificed in the process. Additionally, Seward still had no good first-hand intelligence from trusted sources. Welles, who admittedly took a jaundiced view of Seward's initiatives, commented as follows on the mission:

> Seward's Mexican diplomacy continues a muddle, as it has been from the beginning. Still he continues to get off from his blunders, mistakes, and mismanagement without serious exposure or attack . . . The steamer *Susquehanna* has reached New Orleans with General Sherman. Campbell was left at . . .Point Isabel [Texas] . . . with his thumb in his mouth. The whole turns out a *faux pas*, a miserable, bungling piece of business.[50]

Or was it? Seward was not prone to "bungling," Welles's opinions notwithstanding. There had been a great public outcry in the U.S. since the end of the Civil War calling for forceful action in Mexico. Seward had to do something, and the replacement of Thomas Corwin with General Logan in late 1865 would have quelled some of the administration's Radical Republican critics in Congress. Once Logan demurred, criticism grew during the five months it took to confirm Campbell. The Campbell/Grant mission that became the Campbell/Sherman mission was conceived with several objectives in mind. One was to deflect congressional criticism about temporizing in Mexico by sending a "high-profile" delegation. A similar effect was achieved by the telegraphic exchanges between the U.S. and France in late 1866.

It is also likely that President Johnson wanted Grant out of Washington for domestic political reasons. From Seward's perspective, he feared that Grant was the one person who could genuinely upset his plans for a peaceful solution to the problem of the French in Mexico. Having worked with Romero in naming General Schofield as leader of the Mexican invasion force, Grant had shown an early commitment to solving the

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[50] Welles, *Diary, vol. II,* pp. 648-49; Hannas, *Napoleon III,* p. 288.

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Mexican problem militarily. Johnson and Seward obviously believed that if Grant were on a ship at sea, or taking an arduous overland journey to Chihuahua, he might be less threatening to Seward's plans of solving the matter without bloodshed. Johnson biographer Hans Trefousse, writes about the president's effort to get Grant out of Washington on a diplomatic mission, thereby opening up the possibility of replacing Grant with General William T. Sherman.[51] Such a ploy had its flaws, of course, as Grant, while traveling, could have just as well committed Sheridan's troops on the Rio Grande, had he chosen to do so. An incident justifying U.S. response could have easily been created, just as one had been to initiate the Mexican-American War in 1846.[52] Grant's insistence on remaining in Washington averted that possibility.

Yet even when Grant refused, the idea of replacing the highest ranking U.S. officer with the second, Sherman, would still have a calculated effect on Maximilian and the French. The diplomatic impact, even if slightly diminished, was essentially the same: to hasten French withdrawal. By late December 1866, it appears that neither President Johnson nor Seward intended to actually use Sheridan's troops. They just wanted the French to think that they might. How much of the initiative was Seward's, and how much Johnson's, is hard to tell. Seward had already spent close to five years working on the problem of the French in Mexico. It would be safe to say that Seward, not Johnson, was guiding Johnson Administration decisions regarding Mexico as 1867 was ushered in, particularly given Johnson's looming political problems. Welles reported discussing the possibility of "impeachment" with Johnson as early as December 24, 1866. Even though Welles said that the President gave the matter "no concern whatever," the drumbeat for his removal had begun, and the effectiveness of his presidential leadership was entering a phase of precipitous decline.[53]

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[51] Trefousse, *Johnson*, p. 270.
[52] Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History*, NY: Vintage Books, 1966, p 87.
[53] Welles, *Diary, vol. II*, p. 647.

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Seward may have also envisioned the Campbell/Sherman mission in the same light as General Schofield's mission to Paris, i.e. an attempt to buy time.[54] Before making any further moves, Seward needed to know if French were actually leaving, whether or not the Juárez forces definitively moved from defense to offense, and what Maximilian planned to do. He also required intelligence on the morale of the remaining French forces and that of Maximilian's Mexican supporters who might be left to fight on. The answers to all of these questions came about in early 1867, more quickly than practically anyone expected.

The *personal* plight of Maximilian and his wife Carlota was not something to which Seward had devoted a lot of time, and it appeared to some, after Maximilian's execution, that he did not handle their eventual demise particularly well.[55] The grand geopolitical struggle between England, France, the Confederacy and the Union was what had concerned Seward. Abolishing slavery in the United States and working to make the benefits of the Civil War outweigh its enormous costs justified his involvement in national affairs. Keeping the country together politically after Lincoln's assassination was a task worthy of Seward's talents.

A spoiled Hapsburg prince and his over-indulged young wife simply did not constitute a concern of the same magnitude. Prime Minister Palmerston and Foreign Minister Russell in Great Britain, Napoleon III and Foreign Minister Drouyn de Lhuys in France; these were worthy adversaries, capable of summoning Seward's best. Maximilian, an indecisive French puppet unable to maintain even a semblance of political and fiscal order in Mexico without massive external subsidies, was not cut from the same cloth. Until perhaps March of 1867, Seward never considered Maximilian as anything more than a pawn in a crucial geopolitical struggle. In fact, it was hard for Seward to know much about Maximilian at all from 1864 to 1867, given the spotty nature

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[54] Hanna & Hanna, *Napoleon III and Mexico*, p. 289.
[55] Princess Charlotte Amélie of Belgium, called Carlota in Mexico.

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of U.S. intelligence in Mexico after Corwin's departure. This perhaps explains why Seward's handling of the U.S. response to Maximilian's last days seems open to several interpretations. This final episode stood in contrast to the thoughtful, persistent and ultimately successful campaign he waged to get the French to leave Mexico.

Although Napoleon III's January 22, 1866, decision to withdraw French troops from Mexico proved to be a death sentence for Maximilian, it did not necessarily have to have been. Before his public announcement of the withdrawal, Napoleon III had informed Maximilian in a letter that financial reasons were the basis for his decision.[56] Once officially notified, it was then incumbent on Maximilian to decide whether or not he and his entourage would leave with the French. If departing, he would have to establish some sort of transitional government while arrangements for his departure were being made. He would have to make provisions for his supporters, particularly the Belgians and Austrians who had come to aid him out of a sense of dynastic duty.[57] By signing the Treaty of Miramar, he had forsworn his rights as a Hapsburg prince, and would have to find some suitable position for himself and Carlota in Europe that would not be too humiliating for husband and wife aristocrats.

He had hundreds of decisions to make in a very short time, and succeeded in making almost none. In the back of his mind, Maximilian probably knew that staying might well result in his execution if the Juáristas prevailed, but he was loath to face that eventuality. His anti-republican decrees in October 1865 authorizing summary execution for "rebels," followed by commander Bazaine's order to take no prisoners, meant that Maximilian could expect little leniency from Juárez if he ever needed it.

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[56] Hannah, *Napoleon III,* p. 275.

[57] According to Dabbs, 6,811 comprised the "Austro-Belgian legion and guard posts." He says there was another detachment of Austrians in Puebla primarily concerned with provisioning Maximilian's forces, Dabbs, *French Army*, p. 204. Corroborating these numbers is Gustave Niox's assertion that 7,000 Belgians left on March 12, 1867, 1,700 Austrians out of a total European force in Mexico of 28,693. The remaining twenty thousand were French. Gustave Niox, *Expédition Du Mexique 1861-1867,* Appendix XI, p. 761.

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In spite of all this, Seward certainly did not want to see Maximilian executed. The Austrian was only thirty-four in 1866, his wife twenty-six. That he would be humiliated when he returned to Europe as a "former" emperor who could not maintain his crown might be punishment enough. Public awareness that the mighty Hapsburgs had met their match at the hands of some Mexican peasants would be sufficiently onerous. A reduction in the royal pair's extravagant manner of living would almost certainly ensue. The fact that events unfolded so quickly in early 1867 may explain the surprise of many in Europe at the prospect of Maximilian's execution. It was little more than a month between his capture on May 15th and his execution on June 19th. Again, the time lags attendant to the correspondence of the era intervened, for by the time the word of Maximilian's capture reached Europe, it was already almost too late to intervene in his execution.

Seward never really dealt directly with Maximilian or Carlota, either personally or through formal diplomacy. He was used to dealing with older statesmen. His youngest interlocutor, Mexican Minister Romero, thirty-six years his junior, was very mature for his age, very analytical, self-controlled and, by 1867, rather experienced. Seward was therefore at somewhat of a loss when it came to pondering the fate of two nineteenth-century romantics who considered themselves rulers of Mexico. Their unpredictability, inconsistency, and vacillation alternated with their pugnacity and grandiloquence, making it hard for Seward to predict what they might do under pressure, once apprised of Napoleon III's decision.

Fully cognizant of Napoleon III's capacity for duplicity, Seward surmised that Carlota would be wise not to expect too much from the French emperor. Seward also knew that as far as Pope Pius IX was concerned, Maximilian had not upheld his end of the bargain in Mexico to firmly re-establish the Catholic Church with all of its extralegal rights. Carlota, always the more forceful personality, nevertheless decided to take matters into her own hands.

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In the summer of 1866, she embarked on a one-woman mission to the Vatican and Paris to demand the support she thought was owed to her and her husband. She was rebuffed in both places. In Paris, none of the dignitaries who would have normally greeted an empress upon her arrival showed up to greet her. They had supposedly gone to the wrong train station. Nonetheless, it was an ill omen. Napoleon III pled illness as the reason for not seeing her right away, but the French empress Eugenie did, along with the French ministers of war and foreign affairs, and the Austrian ambassador. They told her that the imperial decision had been taken and that nothing could or would be done to reverse it. Napoleon III himself re-iterated this when he was well enough to see her a few days later. [58]

She proceeded to the castle at Miramar in order to gather her thoughts and write her husband, then went to the Vatican to confront Pope Pius IX. The Pope had initially supported Maximilian because it was his understanding that Maximilian would restore Catholicism with all of its privileges in Mexico. Not only had Maximilian not done this, but he had also sustained certain religious freedoms advocated by the Liberals. In so doing, Maximilian had alienated Mexican Archbishop Antonio Labastida, and the Pope had sent papal *nuncio* Monsignor Meglia to Mexico to look into the problem.[59]

Hence the Pope was both aware of the situation in Mexico and not disposed to do too much for Maximilian when Carlota made her visit to Rome to plead their case. It was during her appeal to the Pope that Carlota had her first major mental breakdown; ultimately she spent the next sixty years insane. Telling the Pope that she was afraid of being poisoned by Napoleon III's agents, she pleaded with the Pius IX to stay overnight in the Vatican. The Pope protested, saying that no woman had ever done so, but her

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[58] Jasper Ridley, *Maximilian and Juárez,* p. 248-9; Percy Martin, *Maximilian in Mexico*, Chapters XIX and XX, pp. 234-256.
[59] Jasper Ridley, *Maximilian and Juárez*, NY: Ticknor and Fields, 1992, p. 179.

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condition was so alarming that the Pope relented. From that point forward, she never totally recovered her sanity, nor saw her husband again.[60]

Meanwhile in France, almost a year exactly from the date of his announcement of French withdrawal to the *Corps legislatif*, Napoleon III ordered his new representative in Mexico, General Francois Castelnau, to evacuate all French troops by March 1867, regardless of what Maximilian chose to do. Bazaine was already withdrawing from the north of Mexico and the Juáristas were emboldened by General Sheridan's troops on the Rio Grande. Having chosen to stay and fight, Maximilian now turned for salvation to the Mexican generals leading his own "imperial" forces, Miguel Miramón and Tomas Mejía. In mid-February 1867, he left with them and their troops for Queretaro, a city northeast of Mexico City. From Queretaro, he tried to open lines of communication with Juárez, but to no avail. The Juáristas now held the upper hand, and Maximilian's forces were no match for them. The Juáristas began a siege of Queretaro that lasted until mid-May, when Maximilian was captured.

In April 1867 Seward seemed suddenly to realize that Maximilian's life might hang in the balance. He wrote to Campbell, who by then was serving as U.S. Minister to Mexico out of the St. Charles Hotel in New Orleans, that, "the capture of the Prince Maximilian in Queretaro by the Republican armies of Mexico seems probable." Given the Juáristas' thirst for revenge, clemency could not reasonably be expected. Seward noted, however, that Maximilian's execution ". . .would be injurious to the national cause of Mexico and to the Republican system throughout the world." Just why Seward thought that Maximilian's execution would be "injurious" to the worldwide "Republican system" is not totally clear. Seward himself left no writings on the subject, so one can only speculate as to his motivations. Certainly, the historical precedent of U.S.

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[60] Her brothers, King Leopold II of Belgium and the count of Flanders, brought her back to Belgium where she lived in palaces until her death in 1927. It is primarily her story that has caught the imagination of romantic novelists over the years, Ridley, Ibid., p. 249.

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sympathies waning for the French "Republican system," once the atrocities of Robespierre's "terror" became widely known in the late 1790s, may have been a factor.

Perhaps because the U.S. had shown clemency to the Confederates, Seward thought Juárez might follow a similar example.[61] Seward may have also been engaging in a telegraphic flurry to show the rest of the world that he was trying to obtain clemency for Maximilian, knowing full well that such clemency was probably out of the question. In 1867, there was not much of a "republican system" in the world, and the execution of one misguided aristocrat was not going to alter whatever course republicanism was about to take henceforth. More convincing, perhaps, is the argument that Seward did not really consider Maximilian as evil and deserving of his fate. Maximilian had been stupid, and had received and acted on very poor advice. Humanitarian that he was, however, Seward probably did not view those transgressions as worthy of death. On June first, Seward telegraphed Campbell:

> Proceed with as much despatch as possible to the residence of President Juárez of Mexico and enter upon your mission. Earnestly urge clemency to Maximilian and other prisoners of war, if necessary.[62]

Campbell instead asked for a U.S. ship to escort him to Mexico, but one was not available. Seward ordered him to find other means of transport. Campbell shot back, citing the unpredictability of foreign carriers, that he felt the U.S. Ministers should arrive in U.S. ships. Finally he noted that quarantine regulations were in effect in Havana and Vera Cruz, prohibiting disembarkation there. Seward insisted that he leave immediately nevertheless, and Campbell said that, because he was under "severe bilious attack," travel would be life threatening. He offered to resign, and Seward immediately accepted:

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[61] The only Confederate executed for war crimes was Henry Wirz, commandant of the infamous Confederate prisoner-of-war camp, Andersonville, McPherson, *Battle Cry*, p. 797, 802.
[62] Seward to Campbell, June 1, 1867, Telegram #33, DR, Instructions, Mexico, M 77, R 113 p. 523.

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It is important that the Minister to Mexico should proceed at once. Your resignation will therefore be accepted with thanks for your service and regret for your retirement.[63]

Seward appointed Marcus Otterbourg, the U.S. consul in Mexico City, to replace Campbell, but it was too late for Otterbourg to make a difference.

Seward's concerns for Maximilian's life proved well founded. Maximilian was not summarily executed, but accorded a military trial that began on June thirteenth. He and generals Miramón and Mejía were found guilty by the afternoon of the fourteenth, and their execution was scheduled for the afternoon of the sixteenth. Juárez, who by now had moved from Chihuahua to San Luis Potosi, was not himself in Queretaro, the site of the trial. Requests were coming to him from many quarters to spare Maximilian's life, and he ordered a stay of execution until the nineteenth in order to reflect. Juárez was extremely devoted to the concept of rule by law, and saw no reason to overturn the court's decision. The legal sentence of death by firing squad was carried out on June nineteenth on a hill in Queretaro (*Cerro de las Campanas*).

Subsequent criticism of Seward was based on his perceived indifference to Maximilian's fate. The U.S. was thought by most in Europe to be the only country that could have changed Juárez's mind.[64] In Seward's defense is it fair to say that he really wanted to exert U.S. pressure for clemency, but the intransigence of Campbell at the critical moment made that impossible? The only written records are Seward's instructions to Campbell and Otterbourg. They both indicate a sincere desire to see Maximilian's life spared.

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[63] Seward to Campbell, June 15, 1867, Telegram (original not specifically numbered, but would be #37 if sequential), DR, Instructions, Mexico, M 77, R113, p. 524.

[64] Ralph Roeder, Juárez biographer, writes that a number of prominent Europeans pleaded for clemency for Maximilian, notably Victor Hugo whom he quotes as saying "This will be your second victory, Juárez. The first, in overcoming usurpation, is superb. The second, in forgiving the usurper, will be sublime." Roeder, *Juárez and his Mexico*, p. 670.

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It must also be remembered that at this critical juncture, Seward had a number of pressing issues to contend with besides Mexico. He had chosen to support Andrew Johnson, and that was proving to be a fatal political decision. The "Swing" had shown the electorate the president's weaker side, his stubbornness and his alleged propensity for alcohol. His tough talk about dealing harshly with former Confederates did not correspond to his actions, something that increasingly infuriated Radical Republicans in Congress.

In early 1867, the House Judiciary Committee was investigating Johnson for possible impeachment proceedings, just as the Mexican affair was reaching its critical juncture.[65] However, although Seward publicly supported Johnson and did much to arrange for his legal defense, he was also quite close to Secretary of War Stanton, whom Johnson wanted to remove. In order to prevent this, Congress had passed (over Johnson's veto) the Tenure in Office Act in March 1867, making it illegal for Johnson to remove Stanton without congressional approval. Considering the Tenure in Office Act unconstitutional, Johnson fired Stanton anyway, thereby precipitating the impeachment crisis that essentially unraveled the Johnson administration and cleared the path for Grant's election in 1868. Seward had shown himself capable of juggling many diplomatic balls at once in the past, but these domestic political concerns must have preoccupied him considerably and diverted his attention from what was unfolding so fast in Mexico.

That excuse notwithstanding, Seward may have also perceived that it might be advantageous not to become overly involved in Maximilian's *denouement.* He had achieved his primary diplomatic goal. The French had left and U.S.-Franco relations were still intact. There had been no large invasions of Mexican territory and only a few casualties from minor border scrapes. Having supported Juárez so long and at such a distance, there was no compelling reason to start the new era of diplomatic relations with

[65] Trefousse, *Andrew Johnson*, Ch. 17.

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his victorious Liberals on the wrong foot. If Maximilian's death was what Juárez and the Mexican military required, so be it. On one hand it was tragic that a young man had to die, but Seward, like other members of the U.S. government, had just been witness to the deaths of hundreds of thousands. Maximilian may have been indecisive, but indecision could also bear a heavy price, as General McClellan had proven to Lincoln and Seward so often during the Civil War. In the final analysis, Maximilian could have saved himself by leaving with Bazaine and the French troops. His vainglorious attempt to fight on without the French was tantamount to suicide.

It was also a lamentable outcome that Carlota, once again Princess Charlotte in Belgium, was crazy. She and her husband, however, had many indications before 1867 of Napoleon III's capacity for duplicity. She learned from Pope Pius IX a crushing lesson on the temporal power of the Catholic Church. If he needed to, Seward might have assuaged his conscience with the realization that Maximilian and Carlota were ultimately killed by naivete.

A more compelling explanation for Juárez's decision against clemency is that foreigners simply could not influence him on this issue. Juárez had been fighting his whole life against the privileged classes, and knew that he would have received no mercy from them had the tables been turned.[66] Juárez and his advisers had more than sufficient reason to turn a deaf ear to pleas for clemency. On May 15, 1867, Juárez wrote to his son-in-law:

> *Los impacientes están dados a Satanás, porque quisieran que en un instante quedará todo terminado, aunque los grandes criminales quedarán impunes, y sin garantías la paz futura de la Nación; pero el gobierno sin hacerles caso, sigue corriendo despacio con el firme propósito de hacer lo que mejor convenga al*

[66] Juárez had once been exiled by Santa Anna for what Santa Anna perceived as a personal slight from Juárez when he was governor of Oaxaca. The second time he was captured by Conservative forces, he managed to escape. In neither case was he the undisputed political and military leader of the Liberals, as he became during the course of the Intervention.

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> *país, sin que influyan en sus determinaciónes la venganza personal, la compasión entendida ni amago alguno extranjero, sean cuales fueren los terminos con que se quiera disfrazar: hemos luchado por la independencia y autonomía de México y es preciso que esto sea una realidad.* [Those who are impatient can go to the devil, because they want everything resolved immediately, whereas major criminals remain unpunished, and with there [still being] no future guarantees for the peace of the nation. But the government [of republican Mexico], without paying attention to those who are impatient, continues to slowly push forward its firm conviction to do what is best for the country, without personal vengeance influencing its decisions, nor the supposed compassion, nor the threats of anyone from outside, regardless of how such overtures might be disguised: we have fought for the independence and autonomy of Mexico, and that is precisely what the reality will be.][67]

It would be hard to find a better articulation of Mexico's determination to make its own decisions. Juárez's words display the strength of his convictions, and his pride in the Mexicans who had supported him. He realized that there might be external efforts to influence him, but he was prepared to disregard them no matter how they were "disguised." As recounted in greater detail in the Conclusion, Juárez and Romero orchestrated a very warm reception for Seward in Mexico City in 1869, where the straightforward sentiment expressed in this letter would be tempered by the dictates of the occasion. However, in these comments, written to a trusted family member, one can see what Juárez truly thought.

Additionally, the Juárez government did not want a Maximilian, living in Europe, to be the rallying point for everyone with a grudge against Mexico, the locus and focus of hundreds of intrigues the likes of which had brought Maximilian to Mexico in the first

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[67] Benito Juárez to son-in-law Pedro Santacilia , May 15, 1867 in in J.M. Puig Casauranc, *Archivos Privados de D. Benito Juárez y D. Pedro Santacilia,* Mexico City: *Publicaciónes de la Secretaría de Educación Pública, Biblioteca Nacional*, 1928, p. 216.

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place. Juárez would need a loyal military to restore order in post-Maximilian Mexico. The army had made it perfectly clear that Maximilian was to receive no mercy. Juárez and his foreign minister, Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, feared that Europeans might consider the reborn Mexican republic "soft" if its courts did not carry out its sentences.[68] With Maximilian executed and the French departed, Juárez and his government could renew their relations with the rest of the world starting with a clean slate.

That "clean slate" extended to the U.S. With the French gone, Seward's policy appeared brilliant, but that did not hide the fact that during the struggle itself, the U.S. had done very little tangibly to aid the republican cause. Seward's explanation for why the U.S. had not provided more guns and money now appeared vindicated by events. He appealed to Juárez's adamant desire to maintain Mexican territorial integrity when speaking to Romero, who reported:

> If a United States army went to Mexico, he [Seward] claimed, it would never return. It was indeed easy to throw the French out of Mexico . . . but it would be impossible to throw the Yankees out. For each million dollars the United States government lent Mexico now . . . later it would cost us a state, and for each arm in these circumstances, the eventual cost would be an acre of mineral land.[69]

Seward knew that Juárez would understand this argument. Juárez had been convinced all along that his republicans would oust the French and Maximilian, if he stayed on. U.S. aid in this process was welcome, but the Juáristas were capable of any sacrifice to achieve their goal of expelling foreigners. Indeed, one of the reasons Juárez is so highly venerated in Mexico today is that he had such faith in the perseverance of the Mexican people a century and a half ago.

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[68] Frank Knapp, *The Life of Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada 1823-1889: A Study of Influence and Obscurity*, Austin: U. of Texas Press, 1951, pp.115-117. Knapp argues that Lerdo de Tejada was also completely against clemency for Maximilian.

[69] Romero to Minister of Foreign Relations, April 6, 1866, #266, vol. 7, pp. 382-5; see also Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 122-23.

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Yet Juárez knew that, perseverance notwithstanding, ousting a Yankee army from Mexican soil would be virtually impossible. Unlike the case with the French, there would be no ocean to complicate supply problems, no European balance-of-power issues for distraction. It had been less than two decades since a U.S. army had alienated half of Mexico's legal territory and untold potential wealth. Juárez feared American expansionism, and may have been aware that Seward had said in a speech in 1860 that the capital of the U.S. would be situated in Mexico in the not too distant future.[70] For Mexico, getting the French out without getting the Americans in was an enormous accomplishment, for which Seward deserved much credit.

Yet from the perspective of its leadership, republican Mexico had not merely been a pawn in a geopolitical game. Romero succinctly expressed such a sentiment to Senator Sumner:

> We believe . . . that the United States' moral influence had been one of several factors compelling Napoleon to withdraw his forces from Mexico. We did not consider it the only one . . . or even the major one. If the United States had remained indifferent to everything, we believed Napoleon perhaps could have postponed the withdrawal of his forces somewhat longer, but in the end they would have left. Although we were grateful to the United States public for their sympathy toward us, we do not believe we owe our success exclusively to that country.[71]

Francisco Zarco, a prominent Mexican journalist and member of Juárez's cabinet, considered it inaccurate to give the U.S. credit for Maximilian's downfall and the exit of the French. Writing to Juárez in September 1866, he stated, "We were saved by the resistance of our own people and by your tenacity, and we owe no thanks at all to the United States."[72] Both Zarco and Romero saw the persistence of Juárez and the military

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[70] Seward, *Works*, IV, 333; III, 188; Van Deusen, *Seward*, p. 209.
[71] Romero-Sumner conversation, April 28, 1867, quoted in Schoonover, *Lobby*, p. 157.
[72] Quoted in Hamnett, *Juárez*, p. 161.

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genius of his generals like Porfirio Diaz as the principal factor in the downfall of the French. The topography of Mexico itself was a factor; the desolate northern deserts to which Juárez escaped proved unconquerable to the French. With all of its *arroyos* (streams) and *barrancas* (ravines) on the coast, its deserts in the north, and jungles in the south, the landscape was perfectly designed for guerrilla activity and playing the waiting game.[73]

There is little question that the Juárez government was disposed to execute Maximilian and his two most prominent generals, Miguel Miramón and Tomas Mejía as early as May 1867. In letters to his son-in-law Pedro Santacilia in late May 1867, Juárez said that, according to the Law of January 25, 1862, he could have had them executed immediately, once they had been positively identified.[74] He said that instead, his government chose to have a trial "in order that the charges [against] the defendants and [their] defense could be [openly] stated" (*pero el gobierno ha querido que haya un juicio formal en que se hagan constar los cargos y las defensas de los reos.*) Juárez was aware of world opinion, and he considered the trial a way to prove that the government had not acted precipitously and out of bad faith ("*Asi se alejara toda imputación de precipitación y encono que la mala fe quiera attribuirle.*")[75] Juárez, devoted to the rule of law his whole life, was not going to overturn the verdict of the military court that found all three guilty. This in no way meant that Juárez was bloodthirsty and seeking revenge. Only these three would be executed, for Juárez commuted the death sentence for other less prominent opponents depending on the seriousness of their crimes ("*A los más prisioneros los he indultado la pena capital en otra proporcionada a sus crimenes.*)[76] On June 17, two days before the execution order was to be carried out for Maximilian, Mejía,

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[73] Pancho Villa would do the same thing when chased by U.S. forces under General John Pershing in 1916, after his raid on Columbus, NM. See John S. D. Eisenhower, *Intervention: The United States and the Mexican Revolution, 1913-1917*, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1993. Chapters 17-19.
[74] Juárez to Santacilia, May 22, 1867, *Archivos Privados*, pp.218-221.
[75] Ibid., p. 218.
[76] Ibid., June 10, 1867, p. 220.

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and Miramón, Juárez wrote simply to Santacilia that clemency had been denied (*Fue denegada a Maximiliano, Miramón y Mejía la gracia de indulto. En la mañana del dia 19 del corriente deben ser ejecutados.*)[77]

The larger question of republican Mexico's agency in the ouster of the French remains open for debate. Seward applied and maintained constant diplomatic pressure on the Europeans from the time of the European debt-collecting mission in late 1861. He told Napoleon III repeatedly that a monarchy erected on a republic would not be tolerated in Mexico. However, he never explicitly threatened France with military force, and, indeed, would not have been in a position to do so until the Civil War ended. This explains Romero's reference to the "moral influence" of the U.S. being one of "several factors" that led to success. Other factors in the ouster of the French that had nothing to do with the U.S. included Maximilian's haplessness and Carlota's meddling in state affairs. In the midst of their imperial pretensions, they never really understood the precariousness of their position. They had numerous indications that all was not well and that their support did not extend far beyond the walls of Chapultepec Palace but chose to ignore them all.

Assigning blame for the failure of Maximilian and the French is relatively easy. Determining just who deserves credit for republican Mexico's victory is somewhat more difficult. The drain on the French treasury caused by the Intervention forces, along with French command and control issues in Mexico, eventually compromised French military effectiveness. The French parliament became increasingly outspoken against the enterprise, as did famous writers like Victor Hugo.[78] Prussia menacing France's northern border forced Napoleon III to consider whether or not he was adequately prepared to fight a war on two fronts.[79] In the final analysis, however, Seward's constant pressure,

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[77] Ibid., June 17, 1867, p. 221.
[78] A plaque containing Hugo's words of encouragement to the Mexicans opposing the French at Puebla on May 5th, 1862 is prominently displayed at the museum in Puebla memorializing the *Cinco de Mayo* battle.
[79] D.P. Crook, *The North, the South, and the Powers 1861-1865*, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1974, pp. 367-8.

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coupled with judicious saber rattling and the sheer tenacity of the Juárez regime, can take the lion's share of the credit for leaving Mexico free of foreign military domination by the summer of 1867. This was Seward's crowning diplomatic achievement.

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CONCLUSION

COTTON A SHADE BETTER

William Henry Seward turned over the State Department to Hamilton Fish, another former U.S. Senator from New York, when Ulysses Grant assumed the presidency in March 1869. After roughly four decades, Seward was through with active involvement in national politics. Seward had sealed his political fate by alienating Radical Republicans early in the Lincoln Administration, by supporting President Andrew Johnson, and by advocating greater reconciliation towards the former Confederacy during Reconstruction. Insofar as the Radical Republicans were now ascendant in national politics, Seward had become extraneous.[1]

Seward turned sixty-eight two months after Grant's inauguration and had but three years and seven months left to live. With the exception of a brief hiatus, he had been in public life since his first election to the New York State senate as an Antimason in 1830.[2] The injuries he suffered in the coordinated attack the night of Lincoln's assassination had left him disfigured, and the paralysis that would eventually kill him in 1872 was now moving up his right arm.[3] He had every right to retire to his hometown of Auburn, New York and receive the acclamations of its citizens, and visits from prominent admirers.

Instead, Seward chose to travel the world. He was always interested in expanding both his mind and his horizons, and upon leaving office he had expressed an interest in learning more about Mexico firsthand. In the summer of 1869, Seward traveled cross-country by rail and visited Alaska, the newest acquisition of the U.S., which was now

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[1] T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and the Radicals,* Madison: U. of Wisconsin Press, 1941, pp. 382-4; Hans Trefousse, *The Radical Republicans: Lincoln's Vanguard for Racial Justice,* NY: Knopf, 1969, p. 152, pp. 240-41, Chapters IX and X.

[2] Glyndon Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward,* NY: Oxford U. Press, 1967, pp. 14-15.

[3] Seward biographer John M. Taylor speculates that Seward may have been suffering from amytrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), better known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, Taylor, *William Henry Seward,* p. 295.

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U.S. territory largely through Seward's efforts. Once back in California Seward decided to take up an offer that had been made earlier, according to his son and secretary Frederick:

> Regarding him [Seward] as the chief defender of the Mexicans in their long struggle with the European Powers, the Mexican Government had cordially invited my father to visit their country, see the people whom he had befriended, and accept their hospitalities. Now that he was free from official cares and was travelling so near their frontiers the invitation was renewed.[4]

The Sewards and their party spent from October 1869 until January 1870 in Mexico, traversing the country from Manzanillo on the Pacific coast to Veracruz on the Gulf [see map p. v].[5] The details of the journey itself, recorded by Frederick, were arduous enough in themselves; for such a journey to be undertaken by a relatively ill septuagenarian was astonishing. When the party finally reached Mexico City in mid-November, 1869 after roughly six weeks of overland travel, it was met by Romero, who was then Minister of Finance; Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, Minister of Foreign Affairs; and the American Chargé, Mr. Nelson. In a telling display of respect for a private citizen, President Juárez, his wife, and daughter met the party, now escorted by cavalry, a few miles further on.[6] What ensued was a political love feast that lasted almost a month. The culminating event was a banquet at the National Palace for four hundred invitees in Seward's honor. Frederick Seward noted Señor Altamirano's toast to his father as representative of most:

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[4] Frederick W. Seward, *Reminiscences of A War-Time Statesman and Diplomat, 1830-1915*, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1916, p. 390 and seriatim; see also Albert Evans, *Our Sister Republic: A Gala Trip through Tropical Mexico in 1869-70*, Hartford, CT: Columbian, 1870; and *The New York Times*, Sunday, Jan. 16, 1870, p. 8 reproduced in the New York Times Digital Archive.

[5] As far as the author can tell, this represented the first visit to Mexico by any acting or former U.S. Secretary of State.

[6] Seward was famous for his kindness to individuals. President Romero had sent his wife and family to New York while he was avoiding the French in northern Mexico. Romero and Juárez's son-in-law Pedro Santacilia were directly in Chargé of the presidential family while in the U.S., but Seward made sure behind the scenes that they were accorded every consideration. He even made provision for Dona Margarita Juárez to travel back to Mexico on the U.S. *Wilderness* once the hostilities were over. See Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward*, p. 492 and Bernstein, *Matias Romero*, p. 156.

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> It is the apostle of human rights, the defender of the dignity of America, and one of the venerable patriarchs of liberty, whom we welcome in our midst, and in honour of whom we decorate with flowers our Mexican homes . . .It is not merely Seward, the great statesman of the age, Premier of the United States. I see, and only wish to see in him, the friend of humanity, the enemy of slavery, and the liberator of the bondsman. His heart, his thoughts, his whole life have been consumed in the task![7]

In his reply Seward reviewed how perilous the situation had been for both Mexico and the Union in 1861. He pointed out that European powers had tried to take advantage of the internal difficulties besetting both countries. He ended with a rousing defense of Mexico and hemispheric republicanism:

> In that hour of supreme trial, I thought I knew, better than the enemies of our cause, the resources, the energies, and the virtues of the imperilled [sic] nation. The United States became, for the first time, in sincerity and earnestness, the friend and ally of every other Republican State in America, and all the Republican States became, from that hour, the friends and allies of the United States.[8]

Whatever had been the case before Seward's visit, all rancor appeared to dissipate in this series of official banquets and balls in Mexico City in December of 1869. Representatives of the two countries spoke as allies who had worked together feverishly, if not always amicably, against a common foe. What reverberated in the toasts was an admiration for Union efforts to abolish slavery and to respect the rights of man. Lincoln was viewed as the great champion of that struggle, and Seward, who had been targeted with Lincoln, and whose scars from the encounter were now visible for all to see, sat before them with their own Juárez as a witnesses to the struggle. Rather than appearing merely as the desperately poor and disorganized neighbor to the south, Mexico was at last

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[7] F.W. Seward, *Reminiscences*, p. 413.
[8] Ibid. p. 414.

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able to throw open the doors of its palaces and gardens, and show Seward firsthand what had been at stake. Seward reacted to this hospitality:

> You will readily believe that I am impressed with the scenes of this new and most magnificent festival. The Government has but intimated its wish and the intelligence, the enterprise, the learning, the art, the beauty, the wit, the taste and the gayety [sic] of the Capital [Mexico City], immediately, as if by magic, surround me. What Capital in any country could present a more refined entertainment, I know of none.[9]

Seward's goodwill mission in 1869-70 showed that Mexicans could be extremely magnanimous if shown the proper respect. They were willing to let bygones be bygones as long as both parties displayed good faith and treated each other as equals. Admittedly articulating such a position was somewhat easier once Seward was out of office. Seward was gracious, and was not about to insult his Mexican hosts. On the other hand, the Mexicans knew it was impossible for their country to remain isolated from what became known as the "Colossus of the North," and Mexican suspicions about U.S. intentions probably remained unspoken during the festivities.[10]

This does not mean that Seward was merely opportunistic in his sanguine comments about Mexico. He reflected on the meaning of his Mexico trip sometime later in a "Speech on his Travels, March, 1870."[11] Written out in longhand, the draft does not indicate exactly when or where the speech was given. There are a number of edits in the text, and just what version may have been spoken is not clear. Nevertheless, the speech's sixty-odd pages give an overview of Seward's thinking about a number of global issues. Seward wrote, "the name of Mexico awakens intense emotions, though of various sorts, everywhere among the American people." Having reviewed the writings of various

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[9] "Speech of William H. Seward at the National Ball, Dec. 18, 1869, *The Papers of William H. Seward*, microfilm, reel #187, #6457, Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Rare Books and Special Collections.
[10] Michael C. Meyer, "*Mexican Views of the United States,*" in W. Dirk Raat and William H. Beezley, eds., *Twentieth-Century Mexico*, Lincoln, NB: U. of Nebraska Press, 1986, pp. 286-300.
[11] "Speech on his travels, March, 1870," Ibid., #6461, pp. 33-50.

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American "publicists" on Mexico, Seward wondered why they seemed to reproach Mexicans for being "grave and even sad in their address and demeanor." Seward pointed out that Mexico had undergone "a severe experience" and that, rather than reproaching Mexico for her history, that experience should commend the Mexicans "more than any other nation to the sympathies, support and favor of the United States." He went on to a brief but accurate assessment of how Mexico's economy was intertwined with its caste structure, and noted that once the Spaniards arrived, Mexico had been "practically denied the advantages of a foreign immigration." Seward was noting the lack of mobility in colonial Mexico, where the Catholic Church dominated practically everything. In turn, Spaniards from Spain dominated the Church.

Seward went on to say that, in spite of all of these impediments to change, many Mexicans had been inspired by the American and French Revolutions, and wanted to make Mexico "a free, equal, federal Republic, in all respects like the United States." In order to do this, Mexicans had to overcome the Spanish legacy of three "radical evils incompatible with the desired Republican system." The first evil, slavery, "having taken feeble root," was abolished in the 1820s, shortly after independence. The second evil, what Seward called the "monarchical principle," was not eradicated until the failure of the French Intervention and the execution of Maximilian. The third evil, the "ecclesiastical principle," or the monolithic social control exercised by the Catholic Church, which Seward said had always aligned itself with the "monarchical principle," did not "expire until both met a common fate in the restoration of the Republican Constitution in 1867."

Seward was right about slavery, although debt peonage existed, and, well into the twentieth century, may still exist in rural locations.[12] The monarchical principle ended

[12] This is a system whereby peasants borrow for their needs against their agricultural production. The value of their borrowing almost always exceeds the value of their production, hence they are always in debt. In the nineteenth century, they could not move until all their debts were paid. It was not slavery per se, but the system replicated many of slavery's evils. Jaime Suchlicki, *Mexico: From Montezuma to the Fall of the PRI, 2nd ed.*, Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2001, pp. 46-7.

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with Maximilian, but that did not prevent Mexico from adopting a political system for most of the twentieth century that consolidated political power in a single party.[13] Seward was wrong about the expiration of the power of the Catholic Church. It no longer had its monolithic quality, but its hold on the national psyche remained, and its influence is still a major factor in modern Mexico.[14]

In this "Speech," Seward also speculated on the future role of the U.S. in a republican Mexico. Seward's record in the U.S. Senate, along with his efforts to acquire territory like Alaska, merited his characterization as an expansionist, as Walter LaFeber, Thomas Schoonover, Ernest Paolino, and Joseph Whelan have pointed out in their works. Yet after his trip to Mexico, Seward appeared to have second thoughts about the extent of future American involvement in that country. He said that many of those he encountered wanted the U.S. to absorb Mexico, as "it was necessary and desirable for its [Mexico's] peace and prosperity." He quickly added that for every such person there were a hundred, or five hundred, who were "proud of their native resources and devoted to the integrity and independence of Mexico." The indigenous Mexicans whom he met were "unanimous" in feeling this way.

Seward was no Pollyanna, and these thoughts represented his mature reflection after his trip, not a toast to be given in Mexico during a ball in his honor. He noted that the Congress of Mexico was "not altogether wise" in its financial legislation and he anticipated a period of economic stagnation due to the depredations of war and the disinclination of various European powers to come to Mexico's aid. Referring to "industrial immigration," by which he clearly meant investment, Seward said that it would not be easy to promise much "for the present," but that, given the situation, the

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[13] The *Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, called PRI (pronounced PREE), ruled Mexico for roughly seventy years, from the 1930s to 2000.

[14] Luis Gonzalez y Gonzalez, "The Christeros of San Jose," pp. 168-174 and David C. Bailey "The Church since 1940," pp. 236-42, in Raat and Beezley, *Twentieth-Century Mexico*.

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U.S. would "monopolize all advantages of that sort." What Seward said he could promise was the:

> forbearance, charity, sympathy and friendship on the part of my country. If left undisturbed by foreign nations, the existing population of Mexico seems to me adequate to work out for that wonderful country an enviable destiny. I was emphatic in the expression of a desire that the United States and Mexico might remain, as they now are, not enemies, but friends and allies.[15]

This speech reflected Seward's genuine affection for Mexico and its future. It also laid out, in rough form, the nature of Mexican-U.S. bilateral relations until the Mexican Revolution in 1910. During that period, the U.S. would relate to Mexico primarily through investment, the "dollars over dominion" of which Thomas Schoonover writes. That investment would help to stabilize the economy, build the infrastructure, and hopefully produce order and tranquillity in a society that desperately needed both. The mechanism of this process is detailed by historian David Pletcher's *Rails, Mines and Progress: Seven American Promoters in Mexico, 1867-1911,* his study of U.S. investment in Mexico between the restoration of Juárez in1867 and the Mexican Revolution in 1910. According to Pletcher, the "annual commerce of the United States with Mexico increased from about $7,000,000 to $117,000,000" during that period.[16] He maintains that, by 1911, Mexico "was truly an economic satellite of the United States," receiving perhaps as much as forty per cent of the total of U.S. overseas investment. The implications of such a mammoth transfer of wealth are beyond the scope of this dissertation. What *is* clear is that the role of American investment in Mexico continues to be one of the most controversial topics affecting the two countries.

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[15] W.H. Seward, "Speech on Travels," March, 1870, pp. 49-50.

[16] David Pletcher, *Rails, Mines and Progress: Seven American Promoters in Mexico, 1867-1911,* Ithaca: Cornell U. Press, 1958, p. 3. See also Smith, *Talons of the Eagle,* chapters 9 and 10, and Langley, *Mexico and the United States,* chapters 2, 4, and 5.

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Seward cannot be blamed for the way in which U.S. investments in railroads, mines, and oil may have exacerbated pre-existing tensions in Mexican society. In 1869, Seward was basing his hopes for Mexico on his experience in the United States, both as a governor and U.S. Senator. He had seen the growth in the standard of living that improvements to the infrastructure could bring about. Infrastructure improvements led to more economic activity that in turn led to more employment. The system had obvious flaws, and abuses of it became rampant in the U.S. in the late nineteenth century. Nevertheless, Seward's hopes for Mexico in 1870 were not as yet tinged with the cruel truth that economic order based on investment capitalism could lead to economic exploitation if not regulated. Nor could he have known that the wealth generated by new investments would be so inequitably distributed. He could not have envisioned that the stability of which he spoke as being a pre-condition for Mexican progress would have an entirely different meaning for Porfirio Diaz when he became president of Mexico.

Seward understood geopolitics and knew that Mexico's Tehuantepec isthmus was a logical choice for a railroad or canal to link the Atlantic to the Pacific. He could see how critical possession or control of such an area would be both militarily and economically in the future. If the Caribbean were to become an "American lake," then the control of both ends of that lake had to be in U.S. hands. His visit to Asia in 1870-71 confirmed his belief that the future of the U.S. export economy might well be more oriented to the Pacific than to the Atlantic. The acquisition of Alaska fit perfectly into his view of the U.S. as a westward-looking power. Ernest Paolino writes:

> Seward had conceived an idea of empire as serviceable in another day as it had been in his. The idea was simply that the United States should possess the commercial hegemony of the world. By virtue of its superior political, moral, and commercial institutions, Seward believed America was destined to dominate the trade routes and markets of the globe, and especially of Asia.[17]

[17] Paolino, *Foundations of the American Empire,* p. 210.

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It is Seward's legacy that he had such a vision, and that he accomplished so much towards its realization during his lifetime. Later, greed and political shortsightedness on both sides of the border would squander the warm relations that Seward had try to forge with Mexico. During the military phase of the Mexican revolution, from roughly 1910 to 1920, the U.S. adopted a stance that was not only unsympathetic, but one that actually led to armed incursions into Mexico in two prominent instances.[18] The Mexican revolution was trying to eradicate the influence of Pofirio Diaz that had permeated Mexican politics for roughly forty years since the presidencies of Juárez and his successor Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada. In so doing, it challenged the close commercial relations between the *Porfiriata* and foreign investors, particularly Americans.[19]

It had been Seward's assumption that such a close relation would spawn the progressive effects on society that industrial growth had in the U.S. However, without anything equivalent to the Progressive Era to speak of in Mexico, the flaws of the capitalist system became both more entrenched and widespread up to the revolution in 1910. Instead of improving the life of the average Mexican, capitalism improved the lives of a few Mexicans who were already rich, and many foreigners. Historian Michael Meyer cites two aphorisms that summarize the problems of the *Porfiriata*. "Poor Mexico, so far from God and so near the United States," was attributed to Diaz himself. The second, without attribution, referred to the economic policies of Diaz, whereby Mexico had become the "mother of foreigners and the stepmother of Mexicans."[20]

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[18] U.S. Marines occupied Veracruz in 1914 after a perceived slight to the flag, and roughly six-thousand U.S. soldies searched for "Pancho" Villa in northern Mexico after he raided Columbus, NM in 1916; see Robert E. Quirk, *The Mexican Revolution 1914-1915: The Convention of Aguascalientes*, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1960, pp. 72-4; Barbara Tuchman, *The Zimmermann Telegram*, NY: Ballantine Books, 1994, pp. 47-53; John S. D. Eisenhower, *Intervention: The United States and the Mexican Revolution, 1913-1917*, NY: W.W. Norton, 1993, chapters 9 and 10.

[19] Thomas Schoonover, *Dollars Over Dominion: The Triumph of Liberalism in Mexican-United States Relations, 1861-1867*, Baton Rouge, LO: 1978, pp. 275-6.

[20] Michael C. Meyer, "Mexican Views of the United States," in W. Dirk Raat and William Beezley, eds., *Twentieth Century Mexico*, Lincoln: U. of Nebraska Press, 1986, pp. 288, 290.

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Another criticism that emerges from Seward's handling of the French in Mexico is that he never took seriously Mexico as Mexico, either republican under Juárez or imperial under Maximilian.[21] Seward's actions and his writings after his visit to Mexico indicate that he genuinely cared about Mexico. In devising a strategy to oust the French that would address his first priority, the maintenance of the Union, Seward also considered how Mexico could be left intact and free of foreign political interference in the process. His methods may have appeared dilatory or duplicitous to some like Matias Romero or to those hawkish supporters of the Monroe Doctrine in congress like Senator McDougall, who thought that nothing short of war, would do. Yet for five years he did not waver in his commitment to see a free and democratic Mexico that was also free from U.S. military presence. It is indicative of his commitment to that country that he undertook to make Mexico his first extended stay outside of the U.S. after his retirement. The growth in his respect and understanding for Mexico is reflected in his speeches there and his subsequent writings.

Of course, Liberal Mexicans themselves deserve the credit for their tenacity in opposing Maximilian and his French supporters. They needed their struggle against the French to end, and thus begin the arduous process of rebuilding a country devastated by war. Extending the conflict by U.S. entry into a war against the French would have only postponed the rebuilding process. For his part, Seward had to be certain that the Civil War did not continue under a different guise in Mexico. Historian Robert E. May has argued that there had long been a "southern dream" of a slave-based economy that would be centered in the Caribbean. Although Mexico had abolished slavery early in the century, Maximilian had opened the door to southerners wanting to re-locate to Mexico. They could not have "slaves" per se, but the rules governing the white settlers' "persons of color" were tantamount to slavery.[22] Seward had to make absolutely certain that such

[21] Vasquez & Meyer, *Mexico frente a los Estados Unidos*, pp. 70-75.
[22] Robert E. May, *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire, 1854-1861*, Gainesville: U. of Florida Press, 2002, pp. 255-57, summarizes Maximilian's land decree of Sept. 5, 1865. Confederate immigrants

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a contingency did not come to pass. Once the Liberal government of Juárez was firmly reestablished and the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution passed, abolition was the law of the land in both the U.S. and Mexico. Legally, at least, the institution that had occasioned so much suffering could no longer be a source of potential friction between the two neighbors.

Like Mexico, the U.S. also had much healing and rebuilding to do. Seward knew that sending U.S. forces into Mexico only twenty years after the Mexican-American War would have unpredictable consequences. If history were an indicator and the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo a roadmap, the U.S. would end up occupying and possibly acquiring the territory where its soldiers fought. Even if soldiers were ordered home, their cultural influence could prove disruptive, as had happened in Texas. The U.S. did not want to be accused of replicating the French experience: setting up a government against Mexico's wishes by dint of force. This Seward steadfastly refused to do. He had started out faithful to republican principles in Mexico, and remained so throughout his tenure at the Department of State.

Various factors had, of course, complicated Seward's diplomacy. The Juárez government was actively pursuing U.S. military aid in order to oust Maximilian and the French. Not helping Juárez militarily may have been prescient in the long run, as neither Mexico nor the U.S. desired American troops to be in Mexico for an indeterminate time. However, in 1865-1866, republican Mexicans did not see it that way. As previously noted, Mexican Minister Romero spent much of his time in 1865-1866 with General Grant and various Radical Republican members of Congress, trying to fashion a "rescue" attempt for Mexican republicanism that would have been an American invasion under a different name. Seward's estimation to Romero about what such an invasion would cost

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could bring former slaves. "Persons of color" would be peons, like Mexican workers, for not less than five and not more than ten years. Runaways were to be returned to their owners. Matthew F. Maury, a Confederate who advised Maximilian on immigration, "hinted of the reestablishment of slavery in Mexico in some of his letters."

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has already been cited: a Mexican state for every million dollars loaned, an acre of Mexican territory for every U.S. soldier engaged. Republican Mexico easily won the final confrontation with Maximilian, but in the words of Ralph Roeder, "it was due in no small measure to his [Seward's] management, acting as umpire and timekeeper, that the field was cleared for the final event . . ."[23]

Seward knew as well as Juárez and Romero that republican Mexico had more to fear from its potential American liberators than its current French oppressors. Indeed, subsequent Mexican criticism of Juárez and Romero focused specifically on the "devil's bargain" that Juárez and Romero were prepared to make with the U.S. military to oust the French.[24] The diehards fighting the French and Maximilian wanted *all* foreigners out of Mexico. They had suffered foreign exploitation since 1519, and despite payments made by the U.S. to preserve appearances, they had seen roughly half of Mexico rendered to the U.S. in 1848 and 1853.[25]

As already noted, keeping the U.S. military out of Mexico was not synonymous with excluding U.S. influence from Mexico. Seward had been an expansionist his whole life, and acquiring territory that could be useful to the U.S. characterized his stewardship at the State Department. Even when his popularity had hit a low in 1867 because of his unwavering support of President Johnson, he managed to convince Congress to pay for the acquisition of Alaska, a purchase that today might be viewed as an addition as important as the Louisiana Purchase. He actively pursued and almost succeeded in acquiring the Virgin Islands and Samaná Bay in Santo Domingo. An earthquake and a hurricane caused the Senate to rethink the wisdom of acquiring the Virgin Islands from Denmark for $7.5 million, but Seward's perspicacity was re-affirmed when the government spent more than three times that much ($25 million) to acquire them in 1917.

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[23] Ralph Roeder, *Juárez and His Mexico: A Biographical History, vol. II,* NY: Viking Press, 1974, p. 662.
[24] Celerino Salmeron, *Las Grandes Traiciones de Juárez: Vistas a través de sus Tratados con Inglaterra, Francia, España y Estados Unidos, 10th ed.,* Mexico City, 1986; Martin Quirarte, *Historiografía Sobre El Imperio de Maximiliano,* Mexico City, UNAM, 1970.
[25] Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo and Gadsden Purchase.

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All Seward wanted in Santo Domingo was Samaná Bay because of its excellent harbor. He almost got this for one million dollars in cash and one million dollars worth of arms, but political turbulence there upset the negotiations.[26]

These acquisitions, or attempted acquisitions, differed from Mexico in that they related to projecting or protecting expanding U.S. sea power or communications capability. Alaska was a sparsely populated colonial outpost of the Russian Empire. The Russian Empire needed money, and Seward saw the value of Alaska's timber and fish long before petroleum became a factor. However, it was mainly Alaska's usefulness as a site for coaling stations and repair facilities that interested him. Alaska could also be useful in extending cable lines for international telegraphy. The Virgin Islands and Santo Domingo could play an important geopolitical role in protecting the link between the Atlantic and Pacific once a canal linking the two was constructed. As Ernest Paolino points out, all of these acquisitions could potentially have a military use, but their real utility was in allowing the U.S. merchant fleet to expand American commerce.[27]

Mexico, on the other hand, posed problems for an expansionist far more complex than those posed by scattered islands and bays. Mexico was an evolved, populated country with a complex history. Part of that history was an unmistakable xenophobia, and the words that unleashed the peasant uprising in 1810 leading to Mexican independence from Spain that have come down to us from Miguel Hidalgo had an ominous ring for any future occupiers:

> . . .Will you free yourselves? Will you recover the lands stolen three hundred years ago from your forefathers by the hated Spaniards? Will you not defend your religion and your rights as true patriots? Long live our Lady of Guadalupe! Death to bad government! Death to the *gachupines* [Spaniards, born in Spain]![28]

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[26] Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward*, pp. 529 and 549; Taylor, *William Henry Seward*, pp. 274-5.
[27] Ernest Paolino, *The Foundations of the American Empire: William Henry Seward and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Ithaca: Cornell U. Press, 1973, pp. x, 118-20,122, 128.
[28] Meyer, *Course of Mexican History*, p. 276.

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It was military conquest and exploitation that most Mexicans hated, and Seward was wise to have avoided the re-appearance of such in the guise of a rescue mission. He sensed that involving U.S. troops in Mexico would lead to a long guerilla war of attrition and permanent hatred of the U.S. After the carnage of the Civil War, Seward found such a possibility unacceptable.

Faithfulness is another characteristic that emerges from an overview of Seward's activities in many arenas. He had been faithful to President Lincoln, which had been relatively easy, and to President Johnson, which had been much harder. In the case of Mexico, he never abandoned his hope that republicanism would prevail despite staggering odds. He refused to recognize Maximilian after most European powers had already done so. Although the question is open to lively debate, it can be argued that Seward gave as much aid to the Juárez government as he could under the circumstances. Although that aid may have been mostly "moral" in the eyes of Romero, or symbolic, Seward did what he could with the means at his disposal. Once the Civil War was over, Seward moved quickly to ratchet up real diplomatic pressure, and implied military pressure, to achieve the rapid exit of the French. He remained true to his analytical conclusion that monarchies were finished in the New World, and his heartfelt devotion to republican principles. It is no wonder that his gravestone in Auburn reads "He Was Faithful."[29]

President Lincoln reciprocated Seward's loyalty. Once Lincoln made it clear that Seward was not going to function as Prime Minister per his April Fool's Memorandum in 1861, Seward never again attempted to usurp his chief's authority. Lincoln, in turn, entrusted his Secretary of State with great power, allowing him to take the lead on the administration's foreign policy. Lincoln would review some of Seward's dispatches, but the president was far too occupied with domestic matters to devote much attention to foreign affairs, about which he admittedly knew little. Lincoln returned Seward's loyalty

[29] John Taylor, *William Henry Seward*, p. 296.

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by backing him up during the cabinet crisis of 1862, when Radicals in the Congress and some fellow Cabinet members wanted Seward out. The contention of Jay Monaghan and Dean Mahin that Lincoln was the architect of Union foreign policy does not seem to stand up to the evidence that most of the initiatives were Seward's. That was even more the case once Johnson replaced Lincoln, particularly in matters relating to Mexico.

Seward's loyalty to President Johnson was more problematical, and his later comment to Drouyn de Lhuys about "bearing the responsibilities of all his chief's errors" may refer more to his time in the Johnson administration than in that of Lincoln.[30] Seward had agreed with Lincoln that punishing the Confederacy would only prolong national healing. He concurred with the sentiments expressed in Lincoln's Second Inaugural, and thought that Johnson did too. Johnson, however, proved far too conciliatory to those from the former Confederacy who had no intention of changing, and far too antagonistic to those Radical Republicans who insisted that they should. Seward's domestic political capital was expended in the ensuing tug-of-war between the executive and legislative branches. The "Swing" proved to be Seward's political swan song, and in staying loyal to Johnson and in helping with his impeachment defense, Seward ceased to be a factor in Republican politics. Grant and the Radicals were in the ascendancy roughly from the time the House Judiciary Committee started looking into impeachable presidential offenses in January 1867. Seward still had diplomatic triumphs, notably engineering the acquisition of Alaska and the bloodless removal of the French from Mexico. His final triumphs were his voyages to Mexico and his trip around the world.

His last one began in August 1870. His son George and his wife, who were en route to Shanghai where George was to be the new U.S. consul, accompanied Seward. An old political friend, Hanson Risley, was also along, chaperoning his two daughters, Olive and Harriett.[31] Rumors circulated in Washington about Seward's infatuation with

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[30] See note #21 on Drouyn de Lhuys interview later in this Conclusion

[31] Hanson Risley was a faithful Seward-Weed political supporter who was rewarded for his loyalty with jobs in New York and the Treasury Dept. in Washington. Olive was the older, having been born around

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Olive. Gideon Welles, ever eager to comment on his colleague's perceived foibles, said he disbelieved the rumors, but could not resist writing:

> There is much gossip in relation to a projected marriage between Secretary Seward and a Miss [Olive] Risley. He is in his sixty-eighth year and she in her twenty-eighth. I give the rumor no credit. Yet his conduct is calculated to make gossip. For the last six weeks he has passed my house daily to visit her, is taking her out to ride, etc., etc. Says he is an old friend of the family.[32]

The girls' father left the party in San Francisco. In Shanghai the others members of the party left, George stayed at his consular post, and Seward was left to traverse the rest of the world in the company of Harriet and Olive. To stop the gossips, Seward adopted Olive, and made out his will in November 1870, dividing his wealth between his sons and his adopted daughter.[33]

After spending three months in India, the small entourage visited Egypt, the Holy Land, Vienna, Venice, Rome, Naples, Florence and Geneva before arriving in Paris in August. When he finally got back to Auburn, Seward calculated that the trip had lasted fourteen months and covered forty-four thousand miles.[34] In Paris, Seward met with former French Foreign Minister Drouyn de Lhuys. In this encounter, Seward elaborated on his perception of the French Intervention and his strategy to end it. Even though, by the time he reached Paris, his upper body was practically paralyzed, he nevertheless retained his spirit of adventure and optimism, and, above all, his keen intellect. The only witness to the interview with Drouyn de Lhuys was one "Mr. O'Sullivan. . . a resident there [Paris] who had been connected with the American diplomatic service," whose recollection of the meeting Frederick Seward copied into his *Reminiscences*.[35] After

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1840, Harriet around 1846. Olive was about the same age as Seward's daughter, who had passed away in 1866.

[32] Welles, *Diary, III*, p. 449.

[33] Van Deusen, *Seward, p. 558-9.*

[34] Ibid., *Seward*, p. 561.

[35] F.W. Seward, *Reminiscences*, pp. 420-428.

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exchanging pleasantries and catching up on former acquaintances, Drouyn de Lhuys asked Seward for his opinion of Napoleon III, whom Seward had met once as Louis Napoleon when he was in exile in the U.S., and once as emperor in Compiegne in 1859. Seward expressed his disappointment:

> I could not believe it possible that a European statesman who had visited the United States would fail to see that the combination of the States [Union] was impregnable, and that the American continent should never again be the theatre of European aggression or invasion.[36]

O'Sullivan pointed out that Antoine Thouvenel had been the French Minister of Foreign Affairs when all of the initial decisions about the Intervention had been taken, and that Drouyn de Lhuys was forced to carry out policies with which he disagreed. Drouyn de Lhuys concurred, and Seward reportedly replied:

> I can well understand this now, though I did not then. From the time of Joseph in the Court of Pharaoh, until now, it has been the hard task of a prime minister to give up all the merits of his own opinions to his chief, and to bear himself the responsibilities of all the chief's errors.

Charles Lavalette replaced Drouyn de Lhuys just before the evacuation of French troops in 1867, and therefore Drouyn asked Seward for an update on U.S. thinking during the evacuation. Seward said that in the fall of 1866, the new French Minister to Washington, Montholon, brought him a communication from Napoleon III requesting that instead of withdrawing French troops in three parts, starting in November 1866 and ending in November 1867, he wanted to withdraw them all at once in March 1867. Seward said that although he basically trusted Napoleon III's promise of withdrawal, domestic political exigencies in the U.S. would not allow him to accept any delay in the agreed upon timetable. Fearing the wrath of the U.S. Congress that was about to meet, and the machinations of Grant and Romero, Seward said of Napoleon III's communiqué:

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[36] Seward, quoted by O'Sullivan in F.W. Seward, *Reminiscences*, p. 424.

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> It was sure to be unsatisfactory to them [Congress] and the public . . . General Grant, with the Mexican Legation urging him on one side, and a powerful party in Congress on the other [Radical Republicans], was inclined to send an army into Mexico to expel the French. I knew this was unnecessary. I knew it was easier to send an American army into Mexico than it was to get it out again.[37]

Seward then went on to explain his understanding of the Monroe Doctrine, saying that it was the responsibility of the U.S. to save republics in the Western Hemisphere from takeover by monarchies. Seward then emphasized that the Monroe Doctrine did not allow the U.S. to "absorb them by fraud or force."

Indeed, after the French Intervention, the Monroe Doctrine was only challenged once again, when the U.S. was drawn into a border dispute between Great Britain and Venezuela in 1895. President Grover Cleveland and his Secretary of State, Richard Olney, invoked the Monroe Doctrine to warn Great Britain that its involvement in Venezuela was becoming unacceptable. Olney explained that "any permanent political union between a European and an American state [was] unnatural and inexpedient."[38] Olney went on to write the memorable phrase that moved the Monroe Doctrine from being essentially a defensive doctrine to an offensive one: "Today the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition."[39]

The Olney quote makes clear that Seward's limited interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine was not heeded by subsequent U.S. leaders, especially Presidents Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson. The idea of moving from merely protecting American republics from forced European re-colonization, to preemptively intervening in their affairs, was furthered by President Theodore Roosevelt's "Corollary"

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[37] Ibid., p. 427.
[38] Quoted in Thomas Paterson et. al, *American Foreign Relations, Vol. 1: A History to 1920, 5th ed.*, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 2000, p. 202.
[39] Ibid., p. 202.

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to the Monroe Doctrine. Fearing in 1904 that Germany might forcibly take over the Dominican Republic to repay debts, Roosevelt addressed the U.S. Senate in 1905:

> Chronic wrongdoing . . . may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.[40]

In essence, Roosevelt said that the United States could now do what it had been prohibiting European countries from doing.

This concept of *intervening* politically and militarily in Latin American affairs reached its zenith in the spring of 1916. President Woodrow Wilson abhorred the Mexican Revolution, and particularly General Victoriano Huerta who had taken over in 1913, after the assassination of Mexican President Francisco Madero. Wilson considered the Mexican Revolution as much of moral affront as a political one. In that regard, he once told a British interviewer, " I am going to teach the South American Republics to elect good men!"[41]

In March 1916, citing a bandit raid on Columbus, New Mexico by Francisco "Pancho" Villa, Woodrow Wilson dispatched a U.S. "Punitive Expedition" into Mexico to capture Villa. The expedition never found Villa and left Mexico in February 1917. The bitter feelings against the U.S. engendered by this intervention were precisely the sort that Seward was trying to avoid in the 1860s.[42] Seward had been interested in protecting Mexico from European monarchical intervention. He was not interested in replacing European political-military influence in Mexico with that of the U.S.

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[40] President Theodore Roosevelt quoted in Eric Foner and John Garraty, *The Reader's Companion to American History*, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1991; Samuel Flagg Bemis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States, 4th ed.*, NY: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1955, pp. 527-29.

[41] Woodrow Wilson quoted in John Eisenhower, *Intervention! The United States and the Mexican Revolution, 1913-1917*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1993, p. 32.

[42] Josefina Z. Vazquez and Lorenzo Meyer, *The United States and Mexico*, Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1985, p. 2.

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Describing his reception in Mexico, Seward said to Drouyn de Lhuys, "It was a pleasant experience in Mexico, to receive the thanks of the President [Juárez] and his ministers for my agency in procuring the withdrawal of the French army without sending the United States force to expel it."[43]

To say that Seward's contribution to evicting the French amounted to merely traditional diplomacy, accompanied by saber rattling at opportune moments, is to lose sight of the many obstacles he encountered along the way. He had kept England and France from formally recognizing the Confederacy. His official diplomats and spies in Europe had outmaneuvered their Confederate counterparts, and revealed information concerning shipbuilding that Seward had been able to use to his diplomatic advantage. He had also outfoxed General Grant and Matias Romero, particularly in his shunting of General John Schofield to Paris. Along the way, Seward made a conscious effort not to paint France into a corner, nor had he overtly insulted French "honor." It was the belief of Seward and several others in the Cabinet, notably Montgomery Blair, that Napoleon III would have been compelled to fight the U.S. had France been insulted or its soldiers directly attacked by U.S. troops.

Domestically, Seward had stayed in office, no small feat in itself. He managed to survive the criticism of his colleagues in the Cabinet, and his former Radical Republican friends in the Senate. It has often been said that "luck is the most important commodity in politics," and Lincoln and Seward had enough of it to be re-elected in 1864, even though Lincoln thought their chances were slim earlier in the year.

One quality that permitted Seward to overcome adversity was his sense of humor. For example, although he always spoke of Lincoln with reverence, and did not like to dwell on the events of April 14, 1865, he did not shy from some self-deprecating humor. While visiting India in the course of his around-the-world trip, he was shown two

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[43] Ibid., p. 428.

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telegrams. Noting that India was rapidly becoming an alternative source of cotton at the end of the Civil War and that its shares were traded in London, the first telegram read:

"London, April 15th, Lincoln Shot, Seward murdered."

The second:

"London, April 16th, Lincoln dead. Seward not dead. Cotton a shade better."[44]

That Seward shared such an anecdote with his former French diplomatic adversary is indicative of how he managed not to take himself too seriously. Indeed, it was Seward's sense of humor, and appreciation of a good joke or story, that made him close to Lincoln. Van Deusen recounts a good example of the Lincoln-Seward repartee. Lincoln reportedly swore rarely, but Seward rather freely. Once while in a carriage together in Washington, the muledriver was cursing his recalcitrant animals. As reported by newspaperman Noah Brooks, who was along for the ride, Lincoln queried the muledriver:

"Excuse me, my friend, are you an Episcopalian?"

"No, Mr. President," replied the man. "I am a Methodist."

"Well," said Lincoln, "I thought you must be an Episcopalian, because you swear just like Governor Seward, who is a church warden."[45]

But of all his qualities, it was Seward's intelligence that seemed to have carried him through. Practically, he was able to find ways to outmaneuver most of his adversaries, notably Romero and Grant. On a loftier plane, he had a view of the United States in the world that exceeded that of most of his peers. That view grew from his formal education at Union College, his extensive experience in government, his travels, his numerous contacts and his prodigious reading. From this mix Seward distilled a view of American pre-eminence in the world based on its democratic principles and its dynamic economy. In Seward's view, the U.S. had boundless potential if only the scourge of slavery could be abolished, and the Union re-established on amicable terms at

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[44] Ibid. p. 428.

[45] Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward,* pp. 335-6.

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the end of the Civil War. He would have preferred to avoid bloodshed amongst Americans, but faced with the inevitability of war, he harnessed all his energies to President Lincoln's to assure that slaveholders would not prevail.

He knew that it was critical that the Union win the Civil War for any number of reasons. In the case of Mexico, he knew if Confederate influence was allowed to establish itself, there was the possibility that the horrors of slavery would continue as slaveholders found ways to continue that practice there. The government of Napoleon III preferred the Confederacy to the Union, and Maximilian's government would have promoted French policy had it ever really gotten established. Unfortunately for France, the crucial year the French lost in taking Puebla between1862 and 1863 meant that the Union was that much closer to victory when Napoleon III was finally in a position to implement his plans for Mexico. In that sense, the *Cinco de Mayo* had great significance not only for republican Mexico, but also for the Union.

As for Seward's greater legacy, his role in determining the direction of U.S. foreign policy for the remainder of the nineteenth century, and indeed until today, is still apparent. Frederic Bancroft, writing in 1900, a decade after Seward's death, praised Seward's diplomacy:

> Notwithstanding his limitations, Seward stands in the front rank of political leaders, both on account of the talents he displayed and the services he rendered to his country. And he holds the first place among all our Secretaries of State. Sumner had more thorough knowledge of international law; Adams was by birth and education equipped for diplomacy; Chase had a genius for managing national finances in critical times. Stanton was the broad and tireless organizer of the physical forces that saved the nation. Seward had dash, a knowledge of political conditions, and a versatility such as none of these men possessed, while his perfect tact and vigor of intellect, his enthusiasm and inspiring hope, made him

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almost the perfect supplement to Lincoln. The Secretary grew in diplomacy as the President grew in statesmanship.[46]

As noted in the Introduction, historian Walter LaFeber wrote that Seward "deserves to be remembered as the greatest Secretary of State in American history after his beloved Adams."[47] Ernest Paolino echoes LaFeber's assessment, and sees Seward as the initial architect of global economic hegemony. He writes that the "true significance of William H. Seward . . .lies not so much in his specific achievements, brilliant as they undoubtedly were, as in the fact that he anticipated the direction of American foreign policy for the next generation and beyond, and with the limited materials and opportunities at his disposal, prepared the way."[48]

This research has hopefully demonstrated how Seward used the skills cited by these observers to achieve in Mexico a peaceful solution to what could have been a bloody and prolonged confrontation with the French and Maximilian's Mexican supporters. His persistent diplomacy, backed by a credible military threat, forced the French to see that their Mexican adventure could not succeed. Unfortunately for Maximilian and Carlota, they were not as quick to see the writing on the wall. Benito Juárez and his successors as President of the Mexican Republic, Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada and Porfirio Diaz, were left with a country devastated by war, but not one occupied or controlled by foreign troops. Due in no small part to Seward's efforts, Mexico was now free to forge its own political destiny. Historian Dexter Perkins called Seward's diplomatic campaign regarding Mexico "one of the most brilliant in the annals of our foreign policy."[49]

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[46] Frederic Bancroft, *The Life of William H. Seward, 2 vols.*, NY: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1900, p. 528.
[47] LaFeber, *The New Empire*, p. 25.
[48] Paolino, *Foundations*, p. 212.
[49] Dexter Perkins, *A History of the Monroe Doctrine (A New Revision of the book originally published under the title: HANDS OFF: A History of the Monroe Doctrine)*, Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1963, p. 132.

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For almost three-quarters of the twentieth century, that destiny contained an element of anti-Americanism, woven into the fabric of the political party, PRI, which controlled Mexico for over seventy years. Now, at the outset of the twenty-first, old animosities between Mexico and the U.S. may be undergoing a period of re-evaluation. A new, more business-friendly party, PAN, led by President Vicente Fox, is now in power.[50] Millions of U.S. citizens are of Mexican descent and hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizens retire or spend a great deal of time in Mexico.[51] New financial arrangements are broaching the barriers that have separated the two countries for many years, and borders may no longer be the course of a river or lines on maps, but areas hundreds of miles wide.[52] Should such a trend toward peaceful prosperity continue, based on the mutual respect for each country's respective economy and culture, then the hopes for U.S.-Mexican bilateral relations, which Seward expressed during his visit there in 1870, will have finally come to pass.

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[50] *PAN (Partido de Acción Nacional).* Fox beat PRI candidate Francisco Labastida with 43.4 to 36.8 of the popular vote. *Partido Revolucionario Democratico (PRD)* candidate, left-wing Cuahtemoc Cárdenas, son of former Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas, received less than 18%, Suchlicki, *Mexico, 2nd ed.*, p. 199.
[51] Latinos (all Spanish speakers, not just Mexicans) are now 13% of the U.S. population, having grown from 14.6 million in 1980, to 22.4 million in 1990, and 37 million in the 2000 census, Betsy Streisand, "Latino Power," *U.S. News & World Report,* March 17, 2003, pp.34-36.
[52] Lester Langley, *MexAmerica: Two Countries, One Future,* NY: Crown Publishers, 1988, Chapter 16.

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APPENDIX I

SOME THOUGHTS FOR THE PRESIDENT'S CONSIDERATION, APRIL 1, 1861

First. We are at the end of a month's administration, and yet without a policy, either domestic or foreign.

Second. This, however, is not culpable, and it has even been unavoidable. The presence of the Senate, with the need to meet applications for patronage, have prevented attention to other and more grave matters.

Third. But further delay to adopt and prosecute our policies for both domestic and foreign affairs would not only bring scandal on the Administration, but danger upon the country.

Fourth. To do this we must dismiss the applicants for office. But how? I suggest that we make the local appointments forthwith, leaving foreign or general ones for ulterior and occasional action.

Fifth. The policy at home. I am aware that my views are singular, and perhaps not sufficiently explained. My system is built upon this *idea* as a ruling one, namely, that we must

CHANGE THE QUESTION BEFORE THE PUBLIC FROM ONE UPON SLAVERY OR ABOUT SLAVERY, for a question upon UNION OR DISUNION.

In other words, from what would be regarded as a party question, to one of *Patriotism or Union.*

The occupation or evacuation of Fort Sumter, although not in fact a slavery or a party question, is so *regarded.* Witness the temper manifested by the Republicans in the free States, and even by the Union men in the South.

I would therefore terminate it as a safe means for changing the issue. I deem it fortunate that the last Administration created the necessity.

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For the rest, I would simultaneously defend and reenforce [sic] all the forts in the Gulf, and have the navy recalled from foreign stations to be prepared for a blockade. Put the island of Key West under martial law.

This will raise distinctly the question of *Union* or *Disunion.* I would maintain every fort and possession in the South.

FOR FOREIGN NATIONS

I would demand explanations from Spain and France, categorically, at once.

I would seek explanations from Great Britain and Russia, and send agents into Canada, Mexico, and Central America, to rouse a vigorous continental spirit of independence on this continent against European intervention.

And, if satisfactory explanations are not received from Spain and France,

Would convene Congress and declare war against them.

But whatever policy we adopt, there must be an energetic prosecution of it.

For this purpose, it must be somebody's business to pursue and direct it incessantly.

Either the President must do it himself, and be all the while active in it, or

Devolve it on some member of his Cabinet. Once adopted, debates on it must end, and all agree and abide.

It is not in my special province.

But I neither see to evade nor assume responsibility.

[Quoted in its entirety with formatting and nineteenth century spelling from John G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, A History, 10 vols.*, NY: The Century Co., 1890, III, pp. 445-47.

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APPENDIX II

Executive Mansion, April 1, 1861

HON. W.H. SEWARD,

MY DEAR SIR: Since parting with you I have been considering your paper dated this day, and entitled "Some thoughts for the President's consideration." The first proposition in it is, "*First,* We are at the end of a month's administration, and yet without a policy, either domestic or foreign."

At the beginning of that month, in the inaugural, I said, "The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government, and to collect the duties and imposts." This had your distinct approval at the time; and, taken in connection with the order I immediately gave General Scott, directing him to employ every means in his power to strengthen and hold the forts, comprises the exact domestic policy you now urge, with the single exception that it does not propose to abandon Fort Sumter.

Again, I do not perceive how the reenforcement of Fort Sumter would be done on a slavery or party issue, while that of Fort Pickens would be on a more national and patriotic one.

The new received yesterday in regard to St. Domingo certainly brings a new item within the range of our foreign policy; but up to that time we have been preparing circulars and instructions to ministers and the like, all in perfect harmony, without even a suggestion that we had no foreign policy.

Upon your closing propositions, that "whatever policy we adopt, there must be an energetic prosecution of it,

"For this purpose it must be somebody's business to pursue and direct it incessantly,

"Either the President must do it himself, and be all the while active in it,

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or

"Devolve it on some member of his Cabinet. Once adopted, debates on it must end, and all agree and abide," I remark that if this must be done, I must do it. When a general line of policy is adopted, I apprehend there is no danger of its being changed without good reason, or continuing to be a subject of unnecessary debate; still, upon points arising in its progress, I wish, and suppose I am entitled to have, the advice of all of the Cabinet.

Your ob't serv't,

A. Lincoln

[Quoted verbatim from Hay & Nicolay, III, pp. 448-49, with original format and spelling]

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APPENDIX III

CONVENTION BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN, SPAIN AND FRANCE, RELATIVE TO COMBINED OPERATIONS AGAINST MEXICO. SIGNED AT LONDON, OCTOBER 31, 1861. RATIFICATIONS EXCHANGED AT LONDON, NOVEMBER 15, 1861.[1]

[His Majesty the Emperor of the French, Her Majesty the Queen of Spain, and Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, being compelled by the arbitrary and vexatious conduct of the authorities of the Republic of Mexico to demand from those authorities more effective protection for the persons and properties of their subjects, as well as the fulfillment of the obligations contracted towards them by the Republic of Mexico, have agreed to conclude a Convention with a view to combining their common action, and, for this purpose, have named as their Plenipotentiaries, to wit: --

His Majesty the Emperor of the French, His Excellency the Count of Flahaut de la Billarderie, Senator, Lieutenant-General, Grand Cross of the Imperial Order of the Legion of Honour, His Ambassador Extraordinary to Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland;

Her Majesty, the Queen of Spain, His Excellency Don Xavier de Isturiz y Montero, Knight of the Illustrious Order of the Golden Fleece, Grand Cross of the Royal Order of Charles III, Grand Cross of the Imperial Order of the Legion of Honour, Senator of the Kngdom, Her Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Minister at the court of Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland;

Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, the Right Honourable John Earl Russell, Viscount Amberley of Amberley and Artsalla, a Peer of the United Kingdom, a Member of Her Britannic Majesty's Privy Council, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs;

---

[1]Cited in Michele Cunningham, *Mexico and the Foreign Policy of Napoleon III*, NY: Palgrave, 2001, pp. 214-16.

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Who, after having exchanged credentials, have agreed upon the following Articles: --

ARTICLE I: His Majesty the Emperor of the French, Her Majesty the Queen of Spain, and Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, engage to make immediately after the signature of the present Convention, the necessary arrangements for dispatching to the coasts of Mexico combined naval and military forces, whose strength shall be determined by a further exchange of communications between their Governments, but of which the total shall be sufficient to seize and occupy the several fortresses and military positions on the Mexican coast.

The Commanders of the allied forces shall be, moreover, authorised [sic] to execute other operations which may be considered, at the time, most suitable to effect the aim specified in the preamble of the present Convention, and specifically to ensure the security of foreign residents.

All the measures contemplated in this Article shall be taken in the name and on the account of the High Contracting Parties without reference to the particular nationality of the forces employed to execute them.

ARTICLE II: The High Contracting Parties engage not to seek for themselves, in the employment of the coercive measures contemplated by the present Convention, any acquisition of territory nor any special advantage, and, not to exercise in the internal affairs of Mexico any influence of a nature to prejudice the right of the Mexican nation to choose and to freely constitute the form of its Government.

ARTICLE III: A Commission composed of three Commissioners, one to be named by each of the Contracting Powers, shall be established with full authority to determine all questions that may arise as to the application and distribution of the sums of money which shall be recovered from Mexico, having regard to the respective rights of the Contracting Parties.

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ARTICLE IV: The High Contracting Parties desiring, moreover, that the measures which they intend to adopt should not bear an exclusive character, and being aware that the Government of the United States on its part has, like them, claims to enforce upon the Mexican Republic, agree that immediately after the signature of the present Convention a copy thereof shall be communicated to the Government of the United States; that that Government shall be invited to accede to it, and that in anticipation of that accession, their respective Ministers in Washington shall be at once furnished with full powers for the purpose of concluding and signing, collectively or separately, with the plenipotentiary designated by the President of the United States, a Convention identical to that which they sign this day, except for the suppression of the present Article. But as by delaying the execution of Articles I and II of the present Convention, the High Contracting Parties would risk failing in the object which they desire to attain, they have agreed not to defer, with the view of obtaining the accession of the Government of the United States, the commencement of the above-mentioned operations beyond the time at which their combined forces can be assembled in the vicinity of Vera Cruz.

ARTICLE V: The present Convention shall be ratified and the ratifications thereof shall be exchanged at London within fifteen days.

In witness thereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed it, and have fixed thereto the seal of their arms.

Concluded at London, in triplicate, the thirty-first day of the month of October, in the year of grace one thousand eight hundred and sixty-one.]

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APPENDIX IV

CONVENTION CONCLUDED AT MIRAMAR 10 APRIL 1864 BETWEEN FRANCE AND MEXICO[1]

[The Government of His Majesty the Emperor of the French and that of His Majesty the Emperor of Mexico, prompted by the same desire, to ensure the reestablishment of order in Mexico and to consolidate the new empire, have resolved to regulate by means of a convention the terms relating to the sojourn of French troops in that country, and have named as their plenipotentiaries for this purpose, to wit:

His Majesty the Emperor of the French, M. Charles-Francois-Edouard Herbet, plenipotentiary minister first class, Senior member of the Council of State, under-secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, grand officer of the Imperial Order of the Legion of Honour, etc.,

And His Majesty the Emperor of Mexico, M. Joaquin Velasquez de Leon, his Minister of State without portfolio, grand officer of the Distinguished Order of Our Lady of Guadalupe, etc.

Who, after having exchanged their credentials which have been found in good and due order, have agreed upon the following Articles: --

ARTICLE 1: The French troops who are at present in Mexico will be reduced as soon as possible to a corps of 25,000 men, including the Foreign Legion.

This corps, in order to safeguard the interests which have prompted the intervention, will remain in Mexico temporarily, under conditions regulated by the following articles.

ARTICLE 2: The French troops will leave Mexico progressively, as the Emperor of Mexico is able to organise [sic] the necessary troops to replace them.

ARTICLE 3: The Foreign Legion in France's service, comprising 8,000 men, nevertheless will remain in Mexico for six years, after all the other French forces have

[1] Cited in Cunningham, *Mexico*, pp. 219-20

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been withdrawn in compliance with Article 2. From that time, the said Legion will pass into the service and pay of the Mexican Government. The Mexican Government reserves the right to determine the duration of the employment of the Foreign Legion in Mexico.

ARTICLE 4: The areas of the territory to be occupied by the French troops, as well as the military expeditions of these troops, if they occur, will be determined by joint agreement directly between His Majesty the Emperor of Mexico and the Commander-in-Chief of the French corps.

ARTICLE 5: In those areas where the garrison is not composed exclusively of Mexican troops, the military command will be devolved to the French commander.

In the case of expeditions combining French and Mexican troops, the senior command of these troops will also belong to the French commander.

ARTICLE 6: The French commanders may not intervene in any branch of the Mexican administration.

ARTICLE 7: As long as the requirements of the French army corps necessitate a transport service between France and the port of Vera Cruz every two months, the cost of this service, fixed at 400,000 francs per return voyage, will be borne by the Mexican Government and be paid in Mexico.

ARTICLE 8: The naval stations that France maintains in the Antilles and in the Pacific Ocean will regularly send ships to show the French flag in Mexican ports.

ARTICLE 9: The costs of the French expedition to Mexico which are to be reimbursed by the Mexican Government are fixed at the sum of 270 million for the entire period of the expedition up to 1 July 1864. This sum will incur interest at the rate of 3 per cent per annum.

Commencing from 1 July, all the expenses of the Mexican army remain the responsibility of Mexico.

ARTICLE 10: The compensation to be paid to France by the Mexican Government for expenditure, involving pay, provisions and maintenance of the troops of

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the army corps, will remain fixed at the rate of 1,000 francs per man per year, commencing from 1 July, 1864.

ARTICLE 11: The Mexican Government will immediately pay the French Government the sum of 66 million as security for the loan at the rate of issue, that is: 54 million deductable [sic] from the debt specified in Article 9, and 12 million as payment of compensation due to French nationals as laid out in Article 14 of the present convention.

ARTICLE 12: In payment of the surplus costs of the war and in settlement of the expenses mentioned in Articles 7, 10, and 14, the Mexican Government agrees to pay France annually the sum of 25 million in legal tender. This sum will be defrayed to: (1) the amount owing in virtue of the said Articles 7 and 10; (2) to the total, in interest and principal, of the amount fixed in Article 9; (3) to the compensation which will still be owed to French subjects as laid out in Articles 14 and following.

ARTICLE 13: On the last day of each month the Mexican Government will pay to the army paymaster in Mexico City the amount necessary to cover the expenses of the French troops in Mexico, in accordance with Article 10.

ARTICLE 14: The Mexican Government agrees to compensate the French subjects for the losses they have unduly suffered and which motivated the expedition.

ARTICLE 15: A joint commission, composed of three French and three Mexicans, nominated by their respective governments, will meet in Mexico City in three months to examine and settle these claims.

ARTICLE 16: A commission of review, located in Paris, composed of two French and three Mexicans, designated in the same way, will carry out the final settlement of the claims already admitted by the commission designated in the preceding Article, and give a ruling on those for which it is the final authority.

ARTICLE 17: The French Government will release all Mexican prisoners of war when the Emperor of Mexico is fully instated.

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ARTICLE 18: The present convention will be ratified and the ratifications will be exchanged as soon as possible.

Concluded at the chateau of Miramar, 10 April, 1864

Signe: HERBET, JOAQUIN VELASQUEZ DE LEON

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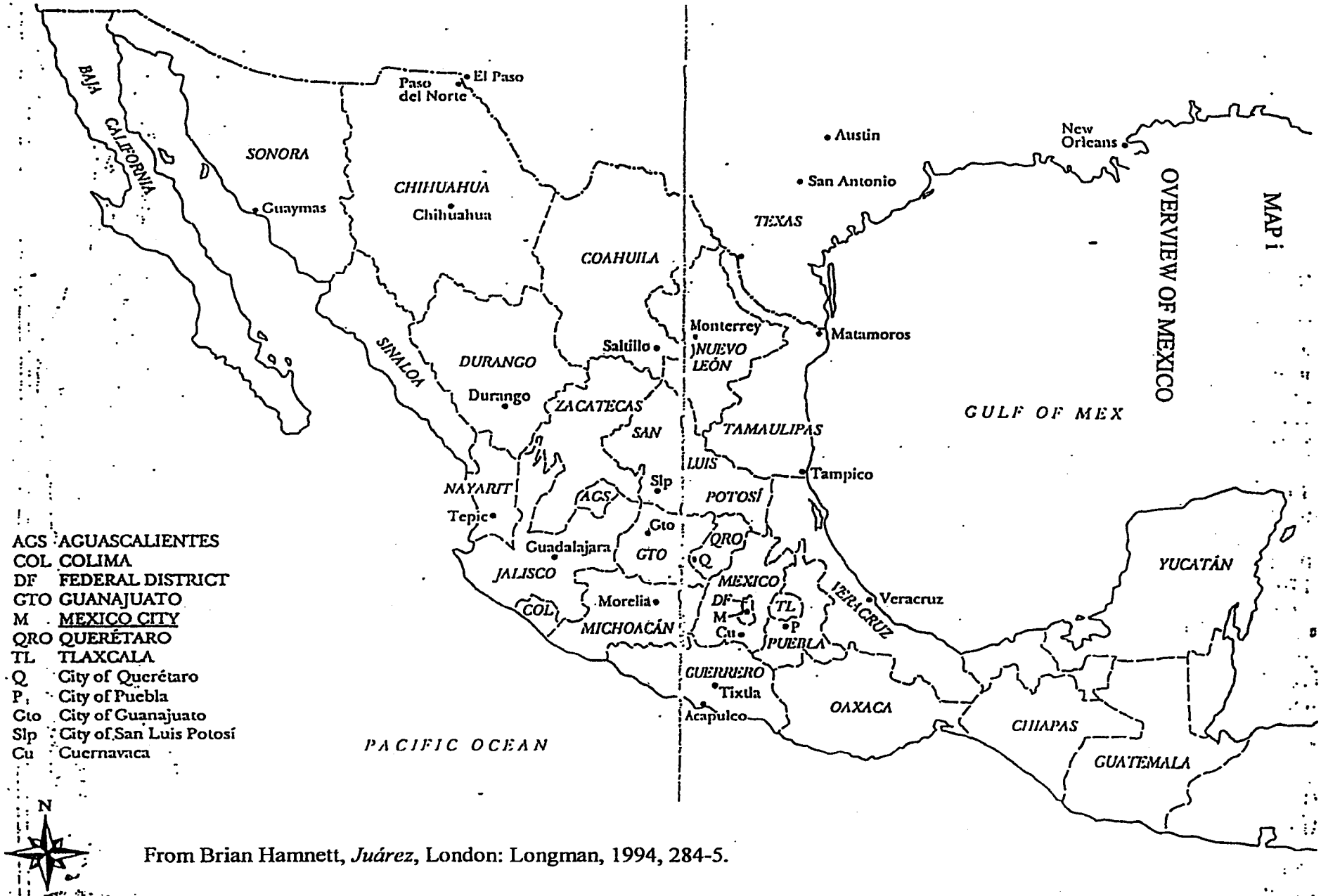
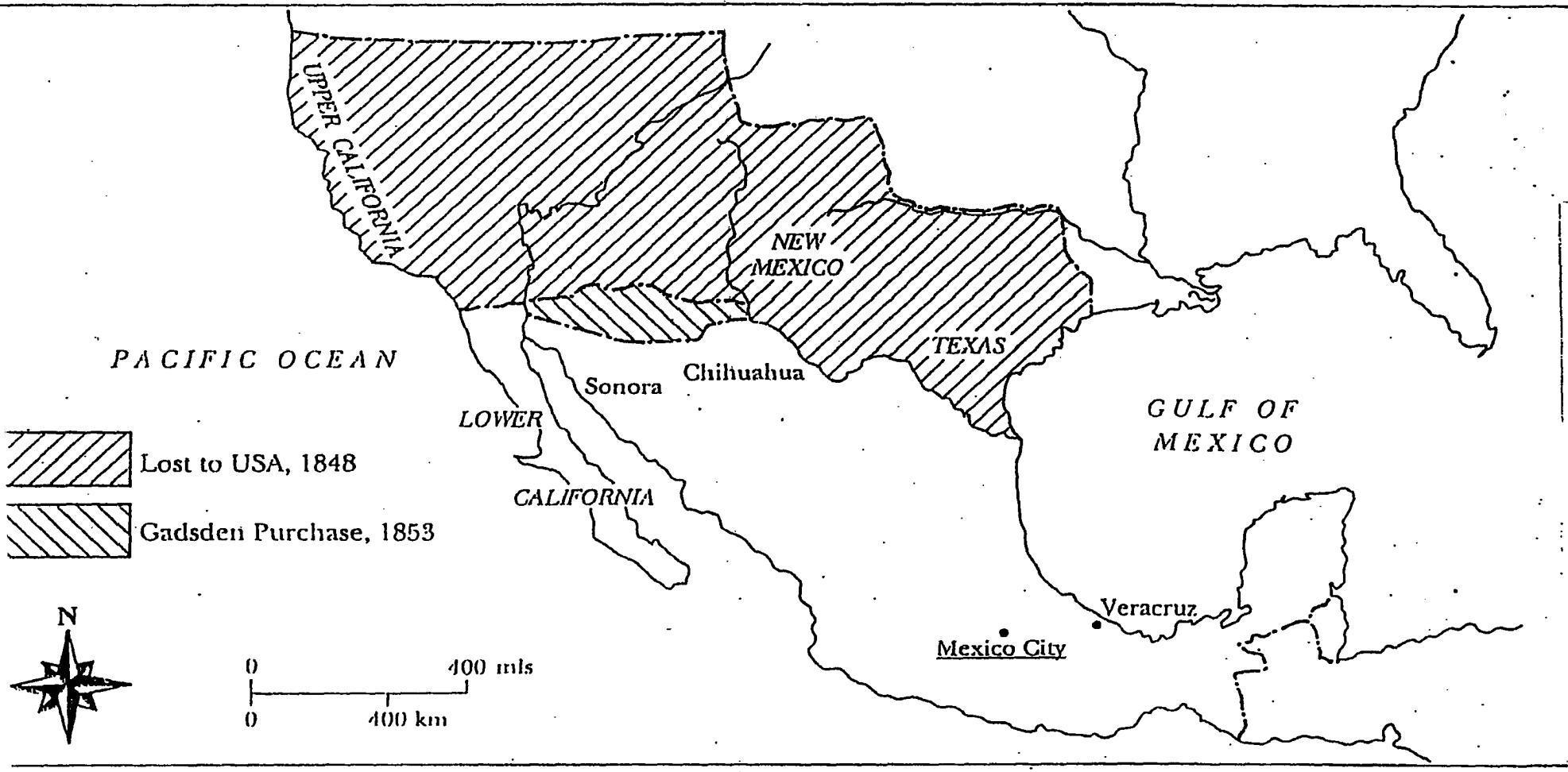
MAP i

OVERVIEW OF MEXICO



From Brian Hamnett, *Juárez*, London: Longman, 1994, 284-5.

The Mexican Republic in 1867



Hamnett, *Juárez*, London: Longman, 1994, p. 282. Mexico, 1821-53

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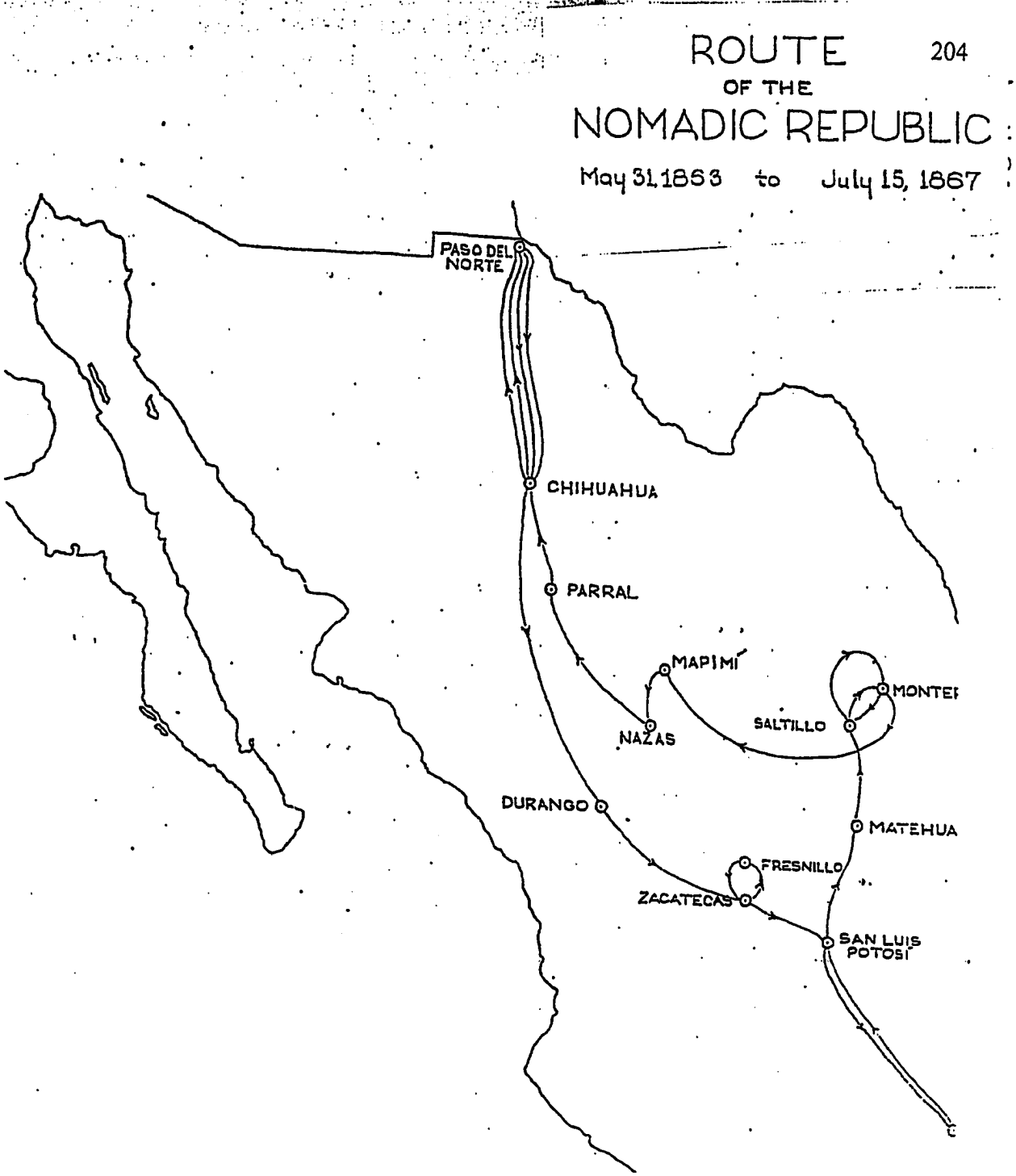

From Frank Knapp, *The Life of Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, 1823-1889*, Austin, U. Texas Press, 1951, p. 80.

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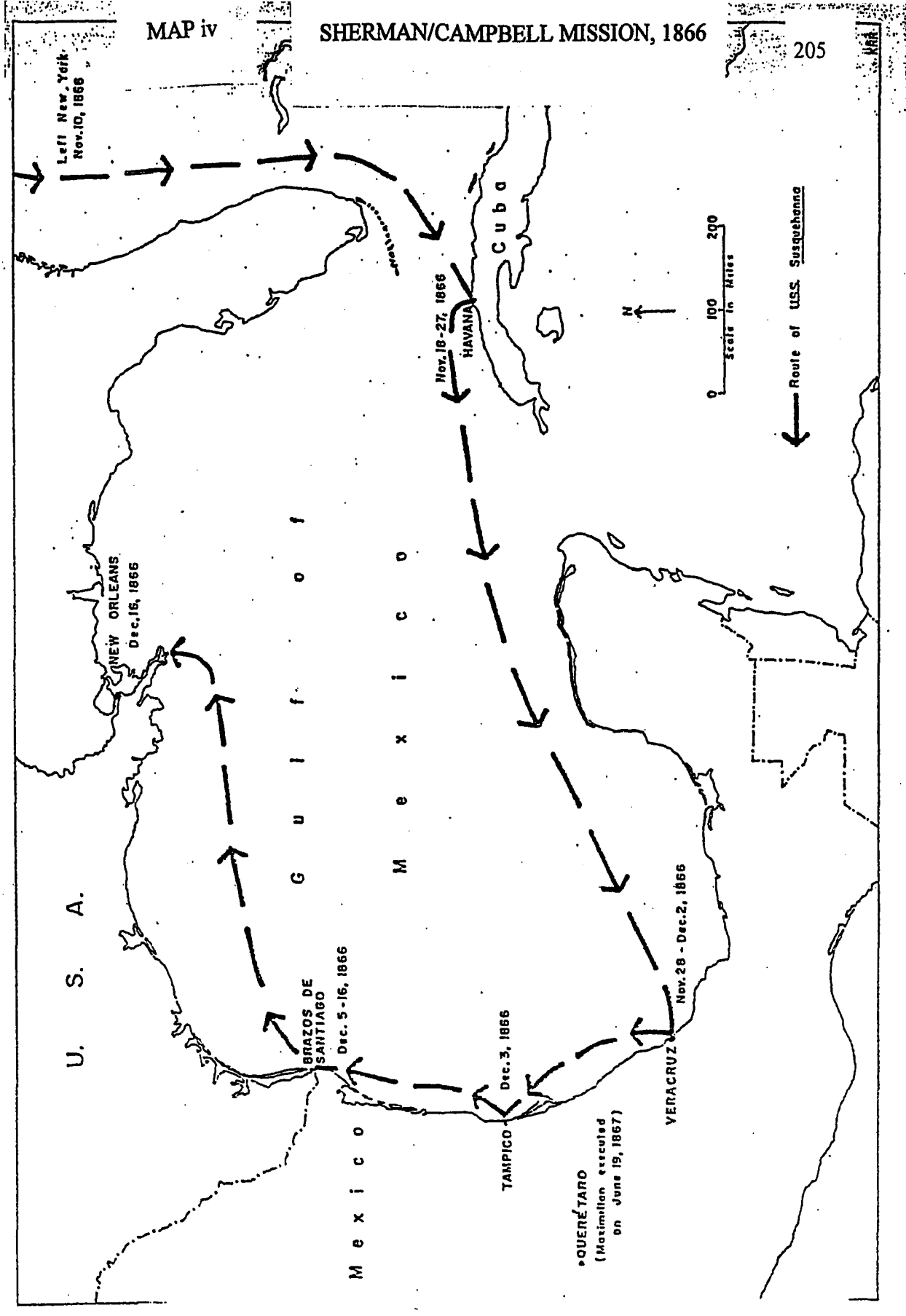

From Hannah & Hannah, *Napoleon III and Mexico*, Chapel Hill, NC: U. N. Carolina Press, 1971, p. 286.

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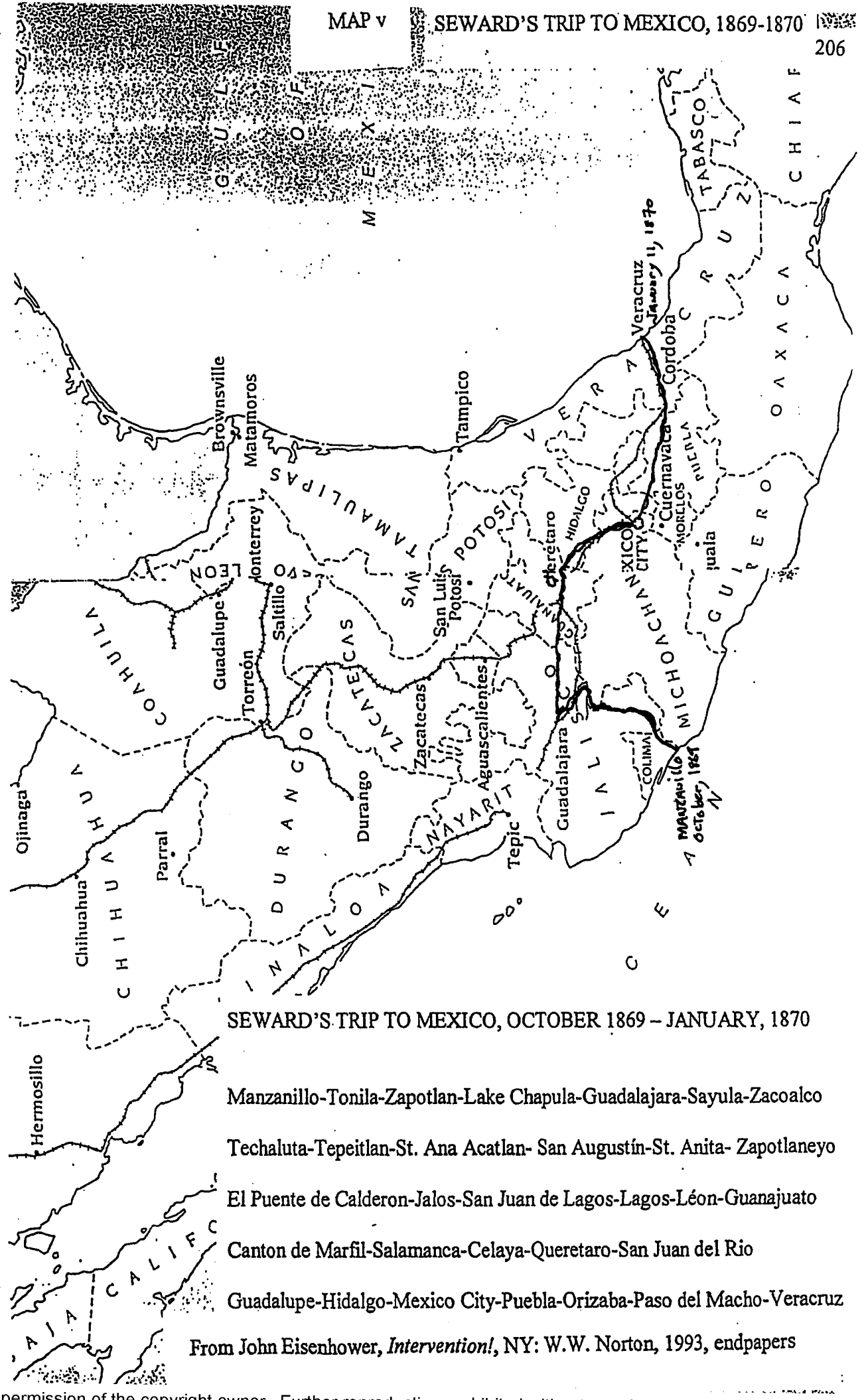

SEWARD'S TRIP TO MEXICO, OCTOBER 1869 – JANUARY, 1870

Manzanillo-Tonila-Zapotlan-Lake Chapula-Guadalajara-Sayula-Zacoalco

Techaluta-Tepeitlan-St. Ana Acatlan- San Augustín-St. Anita- Zapotlaneyo

El Puente de Calderon-Jalos-San Juan de Lagos-Lagos-Léon-Guanajuato

Canton de Marfil-Salamanca-Celaya-Queretaro-San Juan del Rio

Guadalupe-Hidalgo-Mexico City-Puebla-Orizaba-Paso del Macho-Veracruz

From John Eisenhower, *Intervention!*, NY: W.W. Norton, 1993, endpapers

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

The principal primary source for this dissertation was U.S. Secretary of State William Seward's State Department "Instructions" to his diplomats, especially those written to Ministers William Dayton and John Bigelow in France, Charles Francis Adams in Great Britain, Henry Sanford in Belgium, and Thomas Corwin and Lewis Campbell in Mexico. In the days before the telegraph was widely used, State Department clerks mercifully transcribed these "Instructions" before they were sent, because Seward's handwriting was relatively illegible before the assassination attempt in 1865, almost totally illegible thereafter. The "Instructions" and most of the corresponding incoming "Despatches" are now available on microfilm at the National Archives and its regional branches. The National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) publication, *Diplomatic Records: A Select Catalog of National Archives Microfilm Publications* (Washington, DC, 1986) is indispensable when using the microfilmed records. The principal primary source used in tracking the progress of Seward's diplomacy with France concerning Mexico, particularly in the crucial year of 1866, was John Bigelow's *Retrospections of an Active Life* (NY, 1909), in three volumes, which contains both official diplomatic and personal correspondence. These volumes are both informative and entertaining, because, prior to becoming a diplomat, Bigelow had been a newspaperman (part owner of the New York *Evening Post*), and wrote quite well. He had been U.S. Consul in Paris before becoming U.S. Minister after the death of William Dayton in December 1864. He had also worked closely with U.S. Minister-Resident to Belgium, Henry Shelton Sanford, who was Seward's spymaster in Europe, as described in Joseph A. Fry's *Henry S. Sanford: Diplomacy and Business in Nineteenth Century America* (Reno, Nevada, 1982). Professor Fry was kind enough to provide this researcher with his original notes for his book, plus a quantity of valuable microfilm. Additional material on Sanford is housed at the Sanford Museum in Sanford, Florida.

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Bigelow also included relevant press clippings and texts of speeches in his *Retrospections*. His observations on Seward, written in 1892 when he was seventy-five, were included because, unlike Seward's other turn-of-the-century biographers like Frederic Bancroft, *The Life of William H. Seward, 2 vols.* (NY, 1900), Henry Cabot Lodge, *Historical and Political Essays* (Boston, 1892), and Thornton Lothrop, *William Henry Seward* (Boston, 1899), Bigelow had actually worked closely with Seward.

Most of Seward's private correspondence is housed in Special Collections at the University of Rochester, New York, and at the Seward House in Auburn, New York. Microfilmed copies of some of those personal letters and speech drafts were used in researching Seward's trip to Mexico in 1869. The portrait gallery that adorns the walls at the latter location was most useful in providing visual representations of the many personalities that appear in the narrative. A particularly useful source for Seward's trip to Mexico was Col. Albert Evans' *Our Sister Republic* (Hartford, 1870). Evans was a member of Seward's party, and his book is a detailed account of the entire trip, complete with engravings and transcriptions of speeches. On the Mexican trip, Evans' work is complemented by Frederick Seward's *Reminiscences of a War-Time Statesman and Diplomat* (New York, 1916). That memoir discusses the Mexican trip, although in much less detail than Evans. Frederick Seward's work appears to be one of only two sources on his father's subsequent trip around the world, the other being Olive Risley Seward's *William H. Seward's Travels Around the World* (New York, 1873). *Reminiscences* also sheds light on the daily problems that both he and his father encountered running the State Department.

For keeping track of the internal workings of the Lincoln cabinet, nothing compares to the *Diary of Gideon Welles* (Boston, 1911) for both for the breadth of his observations and the sheer biting quality of his prose. Welles had been a newspaperman in Connecticut before his appointment (editor and part owner of the *Hartford* [CT] *Times* from 1826–1836 and the *Hartford Evening Press* in 1856), and his writing skill benefits

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anyone researching this era. He kept meticulous notes of those attending meetings, and commented on the tenor of the discussions. Welles's prejudices are obvious, but his *Diary* is indispensable for anyone interested in the main political players of the Civil War, and how Welles viewed their actions. Only Welles and Seward served for both the entireties of the Lincoln and Johnson administrations, so his entries also have the advantage of covering the same time period as that of this dissertation. Welles had a grudging respect for Seward, as evidenced in the brief quote that opens the dissertation. However, even in death, Welles continued to emphasize the importance of President Lincoln versus the relative unimportance of his Secretary of State in his *Lincoln and Seward: Remarks upon the memorial address of Chas Francis Adams, on the late Wm. H. Seward,* first published in 1874 (reprint, Freeport, NY, 1969). An old family friend and former Minister to the Court of Saint James under Seward, Adams made a laudatory speech to the New York State Legislature in April 1873. The speech was lavish in its praise of Seward, but some of that praise was at the expense of President Lincoln. Essentially, Adams argued that Seward had been the moving force behind the Lincoln administration. The rebuttal, written by Welles originally for the magazine *Galaxy* in 1873, was published in its entirety a year later. Disregarding the Latin motto "*de mortuis, nil nisi bonum*" (of the dead, say nothing but good things), Welles took it upon himself to "set the record straight." Welles completely contradicted what Adams had to say about Seward, insisting that in almost all regards, Lincoln was the superior mind and more effective statesman. If, in the years following, Seward's reputation has waned *vis-à-vis* that of Lincoln, this scathing critique written by a cabinet member who, like Seward, had served for eight years from 1861 to 1869, may be one of the reasons.

Secretary of the Treasury Salmon Chase's diary, *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet: The Civil War Diaries of Salmon P. Chase* (NY, 1954), edited by David Donald, is also useful, partially as a foil to that of Welles, who had just about as low an opinion of Chase and he did of Seward. Chase's entries, however, are quite brief and matter-of-fact, and

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whole issues, such as the start of the secession crisis, are not covered at all. An excellent secondary source that draws on both Chase and Welles is Burton Hendrick's *Lincoln's War Cabinet* (Boston, 1946), which discusses at some length Seward's relations with his fellow cabinet members. This work is especially useful in providing the political context that lay behind Lincoln's cabinet nominations. In trying consciously trying to achieve a philosophical and regional balance, while at the same time paying off political debts acquired at the Chicago nominating convention, Lincoln set the stage for some of the internecine strife that would afflict his cabinet. Hendrick details all of that, and, in Book II, "William Henry Seward: 'Prime Minister,'" shows how and why that title seemed to fit Seward in the early years of the Lincoln administration.

It is somewhat surprising that the historiography on Seward is relatively thin and somewhat dated, given Walter LaFeber's assessment that Seward "deserves to be remembered as the greatest Secretary of State in American history after his beloved Adams." LaFeber's opinion complements Dexter Perkins' assertion that Seward's Mexican policy was "one of the most brilliant in the annals of our foreign policy."[1] When he returned from his final trip around the world in 1871, Seward applied himself to writing an autobiography, but only got as far as 1834, his thirty-third birthday, before passing away. What is to be learned about Seward comes from his public statements, contained in five volumes and his diplomatic correspondence, edited by George Baker, *The Works of William H. Seward* (NY, 1853-1884), and *The Papers of William H. Seward.* Seward's papers are at the University of Rochester, NY, and his collection of personal papers, manuscripts, letters, etc. has been microfilmed by the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections there. The principal Seward biography is that of Glyndon Van Deusen, published thirty-six years ago, *William Henry Seward* (NY, 1967). Van Deusen was an expert on New York politics, and also published biographies of

[1] Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire, An Interpretation of American Expansion 1860-1898*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell U. Press, 1971, p. 25; Dexter Perkins, *A History of the Monroe Doctrine*, Little, Brown & Co., 1963, p. 132.

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Seward's contemporaries Thurlow Weed, *Thurlow Weed: Wizard of the Lobby* (Boston, 1947), and Horace Greeley, *Horace Greeley: Nineteenth Century Crusader* (Philadelphia, 1953). Van Deusen focuses almost exclusively on the political lives of the Protestant men who ruled the U.S. in the last century. Although Van Deusen's works might be considered today as insufficiently sensitive to other historical currents of the time, his *William Henry Seward* is a treasure trove of details on his life, and an excellent source of other documentation. A more recent biography, the aforementioned John M. Taylor's *William Henry Seward: Lincoln's Right Hand* (which has been made into a video), also stays largely within the parameters of political/military history and draws extensively from Van Deusen. Both works emphasize Seward's domestic dealings, paying somewhat less attention to Seward the diplomat. The turn-of-the-century biographers of Seward, previously cited, are compelling to read, but unevenly sourced. *The Life of William H. Seward* by Frederic Bancroft has an entire chapter on the French intervention and cites primary sources. Bancroft accords Seward the lion's share of the credit for expelling the French from Mexico, and thereby alerting the Europeans that the Monroe Doctrine was not merely a rhetorical flourish. On the other hand, *William Seward* by Thornton Lothrop treats the French in Mexico in a cursory manner with only one citation. Henry Cabot Lodge wrote a very flattering depiction of Seward in *Historical and Political Essays,* that clearly gives the Secretary of State much of the credit for the achievements of the Lincoln administration. These older works generally suffer from Latinate prose and excessive editorializing.

In recounting the story of Seward in Mexico, much of what has been written about Seward and the French in Mexico in other volumes about other people or events has been collected in one place. Except for James M. Callahan's "Evolution of Seward's Mexican Policy," (Morgantown, WV., 1909), there is no single published monograph that specifically discusses Seward and Mexico. A reprise of the same theme by the same author appeared as a chapter, "Seward's Mexican Policy," in *American Foreign Policy in*

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Mexican Relations (NY, 1967), first published in New York in 1932 and subsequently re-issued. It is Callahan who characterized Seward's policy in Mexico as "masterful inactivity (p. 292)." Chapter nine in the latter book replicates much of the earlier work. J. Fred Rippy's *The United States and Mexico* (New York, 1931) devotes Chapter XIV to "Seward and the French Intervention," and uses the term "cautious moderation" to describe Seward's approach. Like Bancroft, Rippy sees Seward's Mexican policy as his "greatest achievement in diplomacy," but is quick to add that other factors also led to the departure of the French.[2]

The Foundations of the American Empire (Ithaca, 1973) by Ernest Paolino and *Desperate Diplomacy: William H. Seward's Foreign Policy, 1861* (Knoxville, TN, 1976) by Norman Ferris, provide more modern treatments of Seward's diplomacy. The latter focuses primarily on Seward's bilateral diplomacy with the British, notably the *Trent* affair.[3] *Foundations* makes the point that Seward was dealing with many multilateral issues that needed French input. Breaking or even straining Franco-American relations over Mexico would have jeopardized those projects. It also views Seward as the builder of an essentially *economic* empire. This view is consistent with that taken by LaFeber in *The New Empire* (Ithaca, 1963), where Seward's extension of U.S. influence via other than military means is seen as defining his diplomacy. This idea is echoed in Thomas Schoonover's *Dollars Over Dominion: The Triumph of Liberalism in Mexican-United States Relations, 1861-1867* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1978), a phrase borrowed from Seward himself. This work shows how Seward's diplomatic success in Mexico opened the door for extensive U.S. investment after the French departure. David Pletcher's *Rails, Mines, and Progress* (Ithaca, NY, 1958) chronicles the specifics of how such investments came to be made. No research on this subject would be complete without reference to Dexter

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[2] J. Fred Rippy, *The United States and Mexico*, NY: F.S. Crofts & Co., 1931, pp. 255 and 273-4.

[3] A flareup between the U.S. and Great Britain in the winter of 1861-62 when Confederate diplomats James Mason and John Slidell were forcibly removed from the British ship *Trent* by Union naval officers. The incident produced a firestorm of protest in England, and its solution proved very challenging to Lincoln and Seward.

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Perkins' *The Monroe Doctrine 1826-1867* (Baltimore, 1933) and its later paperback revision, *A History of the Monroe Doctrine* (Boston, 1963). Perkins was the first to point out in 1933 that Seward had implemented the Monroe Doctrine against France in Mexico, without actually ever referring to it by name. Seward was well acquainted with the author of the Doctrine, John Quincy Adams, and held him in high esteem. Seward was aware of the Doctrine's applicability to the French situation essentially from the beginning. Yet he did not want to use it as the theoretical underpinning for an invasion of Mexico to oust the French. He saw the Monroe Doctrine as something essentially defensive, something that was not the case with many of his successors. Additionally, Howard Cline, Lester Langley, Karl M. Schmitt, and Peter H. Smith have written specifically about U.S. diplomatic relations with Mexico.

Lester Langley has written a number of books on general U.S.-Latin American relations. *The Americas in the Age of Revolution 1750-1850* (New Haven, CT, 1996), provides essential background for understanding why Juárez and his Liberals were so determined in their fight against the Conservatives. Langley's *Mexico and the United States: The Fragile Relationship* (Boston, 1991) puts into perspective how these "two republics" have evolved differently. Peter Smith's *Talons of Eagles: Dynamics of U.S.-Latin American Relations* (NY, 1996) is a synthesis that seeks to interpret overall U.S.-Latin American relations by seeking repetitive themes, searching for an "underlying logic" to past events. In doing this, Smith focuses on three periods. The first, from 1790 to the 1930s he views as falling into imperialistic patterns. The second period, from the 1940s to the 1980s, was defined by the Cold War. The third period, up to the present, he sees as being characterized by the "absence of clear-cut rules of the game." Howard Cline's *The United States and Mexico* (NY, 1973) is another classic that looks at the bilateral relationship from somewhat more of a political science perspective.

Several other monographs deal more generally with Union diplomacy during the Civil War. David P. Crook published the hardcover *The North, the South, and*

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the Powers 1861-1865 (Sydney, Australia, 1974) which he followed a year later with the paperback *Diplomacy During the American Civil War* covering the same material. Crook's work detailed the wider European context in which Napoleon III was making his decisions, making a case for Napoleon III losing his nerve for his Mexican adventure in light of menacing developments on his own borders. Jay Monaghan's *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Affairs: A Diplomat in Carpet Slippers* (Lincoln, NB, 1997) is a paperback re-issue, with a new introduction, of Monaghan's 1945 book with the title reversed.[4] This work makes only passing reference to the diplomacy of the Lincoln administration towards Mexico, ending as it does with a brief reference page and one-half reference to events in Mexico. Dean Mahin also gives the lion's share of the credit for diplomatic success to Lincoln, not Seward, in his *One War at a Time: The International Dimensions of the American Civil War* (Washington, DC, 2000). This dissertation contends just the opposite: that Seward formulated the U.S. foreign policy to which presidents Lincoln and Johnson generally acquiesced, particularly in the case of Mexico. That policy, reflecting a sense of history and the potential for future U.S. economic hegemony, achieved its goals and kept the U.S. on good terms with both Mexico and France for long after Seward died.

As far as the presidents for whom Seward worked, Eric McKitrick contends in 1969 in his collections of essays, *Andrew Johnson, A Profile* (NY, 1969), that "no truly satisfactory biography of Andrew Johnson has ever been written." It appears that Hans Trefousse's *Andrew Johnson: A Biography* (New York, 1997) has rectified that situation, being both well written and well footnoted. Brooks D. Simpson's *The Reconstruction Presidents* (Lawrence, KS, 1998) is another work that attempts to rectify the dearth of Johnson material. That being said, the University of New Hampshire's library still only has twenty-two entries under Andrew Johnson as "subject." Most of those are at least four decades old, and relate to either Reconstruction or impeachment. *Johnson, Grant*

[4] Jay Monaghan, *A Diplomat in Carpet Slippers*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1945

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and the Politics of Reconstruction (NY, 1973) by Martin Mantell focuses primarily on the political problems of Reconstruction and only mentions Seward in passing. In *The Presidency of Andrew Johnson* (Lawrence, KS, 1979), Albert Castel summarizes the reasons why Johnson needed Seward, and why he deferred to him in matters of foreign policy. The essays in McKitrick's own work, particularly that of Howard K. Beale, also tend to reinforce the premise of this dissertation that Seward was firmly in charge of foreign policy during Johnson's tenure.

On the other hand, there are thousands of books and pamphlets about Abraham Lincoln. Seward biographer John M. Taylor puts the discrepancy in the quantity of Lincoln versus Seward historiography front and center in the preface to his *William Henry Seward: Lincoln's Right Hand* (NY, 1991):

> There are, at this writing, several thousand books about Abraham Lincoln; the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library, in Fort Wayne, Indiana, lists more than ten thousand Lincoln titles (although these include pamphlets as well as books). In contrast, there are no more than a dozen about Seward, of which only two – Burton Hendrick's 1946 volume, *Lincoln's War Cabinet,* and the 1967 biography of Glyndon Van Deusen – have any place on a contemporary bookshelf. (p. ix)

Taylor's own book could now be added to his own very short list, as it does provide many insights not contained in Van Deusen. Volume four of J.G. Randall's and Richard N. Current's *Lincoln, The President: Last Full Measure* (NY, 1955) was consulted to see how Lincoln biographers viewed the interplay between Seward and Lincoln on Mexico. The authors' assertion that, by early 1865, Lincoln "still took an occasional hand in diplomatic affairs" reinforces the idea that Seward was the principal architect of the administration's foreign policy. The ten-volume John Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln: A History* (NY, 1890), and Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln,* 9 vols., (New Brunswick, NJ,1952-55) contain firsthand accounts of events in the Lincoln administration. In Nicolay and Hay, Chapter XXVI,

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volume three was valuable for the details of Seward's "April Fool's Memorandum," and chapter XIV on Maximilian in volume seven also proved instructive. In the latter, Lincoln and Seward are viewed as collaborating on the policy towards France in Mexico, particularly the neutrality adopted by the U.S. during the Civil War, but all of the quotes are from Seward's messages. More about Lincoln and Seward was culled from James McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (NY, 1988). *Battle Cry* was used essentially as an indispensable reference book for the many battles and personalities involved in the Civil War.

Both McPherson and David Donald, *Charles Sumner and the Rights of Man* (NY, 1970), tend to emphasize that Seward tended towards political manipulation, due, in part, to his close association with New York political boss, Thurlow Weed, and his years as an elected official. There is no doubt that Seward took politics into his calculus when making decisions, but in his appointed role as Secretary of State, he did not bow often to congressional pressure, as is shown by the consistency over time of his approach to Mexico.

On the military front, the second volume of General Philip Sheridan's *Personal Memoirs* (NY: 1888) was particularly useful in sorting out the relatively confused situation on the Rio Grande in 1865-67. Sheridan considered Seward dilatory, and took a good deal of the credit for getting the French out of Mexico because it was his troops who were rattling sabers on the border. Although self-serving, the *Personal Memoirs* provide much of the detail necessary to understand the complexity of the problem that Seward was trying to solve.

Another military memoir, General John M. Schofield's *Forty Six Years in the Army* (NY, 1897) tells his side of his diplomatic mission to France in the winter of 1865-66. Seemingly unaware of his co-option by Seward, Schofield dutifully recounts his essentially meaningless mission in the French capital, although he himself did not perceive it as such. His reports were useful in providing another perspective concerning

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the Mexican crisis from his French interlocutors. His speculations about Napoleon III's strategy in Mexico were also revealing, but minimized somewhat in importance when juxtaposed with Seward's and Bigelow's comments on what Schofield was actually doing in Paris. In terms of the overall diplomatic initiative regarding Mexico, Schofield's role was primarily symbolic.

The French Army in Mexico 1861-1867 (The Hague, 1963), by Jack A. Dabbs is an excellent source of statistical data on the deployment of French forces in Mexico, and the many command and control problems that force encountered. His work is important in that it shows the initial commitment of the French forces, especially their determination to avenge the May 5, 1862 defeat at Puebla. The gradual deterioration of that resolve in the face of the political wrangles between the force's high command and Maximilian is also documented, along with the demoralizing effect that guerrilla war in hostile topography had on the French over time. Dabbs even has a section on the way in which the French army presence affected Mexican culture. A valuable supplement to Dabbs' work is Gustave Niox's *Expédition du Mexique 1861-1867* (Paris, 1874) in French. The eleven appendices at the end provide a wealth of statistical data on the Intervention, particularly numbers of troops, and financial details of the French presence in Mexico, including the particulars of the infamous Jecker loans.

Brooks Simpson has written extensively on this period, and his *Ulysses S. Grant* (Boston, 2000), and *Let Us Have Peace* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1991) were both useful in acquiring an understanding of how Grant's meteoric rise in the inner circles of Washington became the principal threat to Seward's cautious policy. Part One of Simpson's *The Reconstruction Presidents*, cited above, was useful for showing how the complex problems of Reconstruction arose just as Seward's policy towards Mexico was reaching a critical stage.

Several works in Spanish and two corresponding translations were consulted. Thomas Schoonover's *Mexican Lobby: Matias Romero in Washington, 1861-1867*

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translates passages from Mexican Minister to Washington Matías Romero's *Correspondencia de la legación mexicana en Washington durante la intervención extranjera, 1860-1868* (Mexico City, 1870-1892). *Mexico frente a los Estados Unidos* by Josefina Zoraida Vasaquez and Lorenzo Meyer, which poses the hypothesis that the benign economic vision that Seward had for Mexican-American relations based on trade turned into a nightmare for many Mexicans, can be found in English as *The United States and Mexico* (Chicago, 1985).

Romero wrote copiously, although the hardcover ten volume complete set is not readily available (this researcher initially consulted a copy in Special Collections at the library of *La Universidad de las Américas,* in Cholula, Mexico; the entire set, as of this writing, is available on microfilm through Inter-Library Loan). In many ways it provides in-depth perspective on events and personalities relating to the French intervention in Mexico, similar to those contained in Welles's *Diary,* although Romero's tone is much more formal. His *Correspondencia* served as the dissertation's principal source for the Liberal Mexican perspective on the problem of the French intervention.[5] Of particular interest was the way in which Romero gained access to the Lincoln and Johnson administrations, and to members of congress willing to support republican Mexico's cause. Not only is the *Correspondencia* a great record of political reporting, it is also a probably one of the first written records of how a foreign government went about influencing U.S. policy, and how a foreign diplomat was able to affect U.S. domestic politics. Although probably not the first foreign lobbyist, Romero certainly has to be among the first to leave such detailed records of how he went about his business. The excerpts from the *Correspondencia* that were used in the translation by Thomas and Ebba Schoonover in *Mexican Lobby* (Lexington, KY, 1986) have been double-checked against Romero's original Spanish, using the microfilmed version. Romero's words themselves

[5] Matías Romero, *Correspondencia de la legación mexicana en Washington durante la intervención extranjera, 1860-1868, 10 vols.*, Mexico: Imprenta del Gobierno, 1870-92.

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provide a Mexican perspective on political events in the U.S., one that occasionally differs markedly from that of his U.S. counterparts. Professor Schoonover's brief chapter introductions to the years covered in *Mexican Lobby*, are succinct summaries of the specific historical context in which Romero was working.

Harry Bernstein published a complete biography of Romero in Spanish in 1973, *Matías Romero 1837-1898* (Mexico City, 1973). This work is good in tracing the Oaxacan connection among the Mexican Liberal leadership, and especially good for detailing how Romero occasionally worked outside of traditional diplomatic boundaries. Romero's *Diario personal de Matías Romero 1855-1865* (Mexico City, 1960), edited by Emma Cosio Villegas contained valuable notes about Romero's pre-inaugural trip to Springfield to present Mexico's case directly to president-elect Lincoln. In addition to Romero's *La Correspondencia*, Bernstein's biography of Romero, and Emma Cosio Villegas's edited *Diario* of Romero, several other works in Spanish were consulted. *Archivos privados de Benito Juárez* (Mexico, 1928), edited by J.M. Puig Casauranc is Juárez's own correspondence to his son-in-law Pedro Santacilia, who was looking after Juárez's family when they evacuated to New York in August, 1864. It provides valuable insights into the Mexican president's thinking, particularly about Maximilian's execution. In these very personal letters, Juárez shows his deep concern for his family, even as he was being forced to escape the French who were intent on his capture and probable execution. Juárez's letters are also used in Ernesto de la Torre Villar's *La Intervención Francesa y el Triunfo de la República* (Mexico City, 1968) in two volumes which emphasizes the importance of the Mexican Republic itself when it came to evicting the French. Some of the details of how Juárez conducted governmental affairs are contained in Jorge Pedraza's *Juárez in Monterrey* (Monterrey, Mexico, 1970), which complements nicely Frank Knapp's *The Life of Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada* (Austin,TX, 1951) which also provides many fascinating glimpses of life inside a government on the run.

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U.S.-Mexican bilateral relations are always topical for Mexican writers. Martin Quirarte's *Historiografía Sobre El Imperio de Maximiliano* (Mexico City, 1970) provides a general overview of the Mexican and French writing on the Intervention. On a more general plane, Luis G. Zorilla's *Historia* is a two-volume treatment of U.S. relations with Mexico from 1800 to 1958 that contains a wealth of statistical data. Juárez himself is controversial, particularly in light of his anti-clericalism. The classic treatment of Juárez in Spanish is Justo Sierra's *Juárez, Su Obra y Su Tiempo* (Mexico City, 1905-1906), a massive work published in 1905-06. Its five hundred folio pages tell Sierra's version of the Juárez story, unfortunately with neither footnotes nor bibliography. The book itself is practically a work of art, containing thirty-two hand-tinted portraits of all the principal actors and the author himself. Fernando Benitez's *Un indio zapoteco llamado Benito Juárez* (Mexico City, 1998) is a hagiography that tries to overcome the image of Juárez as a passionless stoic. On the other end of the spectrum lies Celerino Salmeron's *Las grandes traiciones de Juárez* (Iztacalco, Mexico, 1986), which is brutally critical of Juárez. This book, which has gone through ten printings, sees Juárez as a traitor to Mexico for what he was willing to bargain away to foreigners, particularly in terms of economic concessions.

The research for this project necessitated triangulation between the U.S., Mexico and France. Except for one new publication, the historiography on Napoleon III's involvement in Mexico is also somewhat dated. An extensive overview of all of France's diplomatic relations with the U.S. during the Civil War is contained in *The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy* (Philadelphia, 1970) by Lynn Case and Warren F. Spencer. This work was particularly useful in detailing Napoleon III's duplicity concerning France's role in building ships for the Confederacy. Published at almost the same time, Alfred and Kathryn Hanna's *Napoleon III and Mexico* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1971), provides an excellent narrative of France's involvement in Mexico.

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Almost all works on the subject depict Napoleon III as deceitful to some degree. A recent exception to this is a monograph by Michele Cunningham, *Mexico and the Foreign Policy of Napoleon III* (NY, 2001). Cunningham takes the position that Napoleon III's motives were more altruistic than self-serving, and that Napoleon III was not only badly served by his advisors, but lied to by many. Her work is valuable in that she cites many archival sources in the original French. This dissertation, however, does not see Napoleon III as benign, and views his abandonment of Maximilian and his wife as despicable. There are a raft of quasi-historical books on the demise of Maximilian and his wife Carlota. Their story has long been grist for the mill of romantic literature. However, Jasper Ridley's *Maximilian and Juárez* (NY, 1992) stands out among them. The footnoting is a little unorthodox for scholarly history, but Ridley's grasp of the entire story is impressive. His work also contains excellent pictures of all the principal participants in the drama.

The dissertation treats Confederate diplomacy only as it relates to that of the Union in Mexico, although the Confederates were very active in Europe early on in the Civil War trying to gain diplomatic recognition, and in Mexico trying to ally themselves with the French. The principal work on this subject is Frank Owsley's *King Cotton Diplomacy* (Chicago, 1931). Robert May's *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire 1854-1861* detailed the plans, developed well before the Civil War, to extend slavery to the Caribbean and Mexico. It cites the edict of Maximilian that would have effectively reintroduced into Mexico a form of labor that was tantamount to slavery.

A number of relatively contemporary works were used to comment in the Conclusion on what has transpired in Mexico since Seward's visit 1869-70 visit. *Diaz* (NY, 1917) by David Hannay tries to take stock of the Mexican leader a few years after he had been ousted from power. In *The United States Versus Porfirio Diaz* (Lincoln, NB, 1963), Daniel Cosio Villegas focuses on how Porfirio Diaz initially annulled foreign contracts made my his predecessor as Mexican president, Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada,

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then relented. It is a good complement to David Pletcher's *Rails, Mines, and Progress* cited above. Barbara Tuchman's *The Zimmerman Telegram* (NY, 1994), Robert Quirk's *The Mexican Revolution, 1914-15* (NY, 1970) and John Eisenhower's *Intervention: The United States and the Mexican Revolution, 1913-1917* (NY: 1993) are excellent sources on how Seward's vision of amicable relations between the U.S. and Mexico were transformed by the meddling of U.S. Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson, and the moralizing of President Woodrow Wilson. *Twentieth Century Mexico* (Lincoln, NB, 1986) is a collection of essays on a variety of subjects, and was used for its observations on the role of the Catholic Church, and its excellent concluding essay on Mexico's view of the U.S. by a famous scholar of U.S.-Mexican bilateral relations, Michael C. Meyer. Four other books brought the researcher right to the present. *Distant Neighbors: A Portrait of the Mexicans* (NY, 1985) chronicles the perception of a *New York Times* correspondent with long experience in Mexico, that "probably nowhere in the world do two neighbors understand each other so little."[6] Lester Langley's *MexAmerica: Two Countries, One Future* (NY, 1988) shows how the two countries are starting to meld along the Rio Grande, as the title implies. Ramon Ruiz's *On the Rim of Mexico: Encounters of the Rich and Poor* (Boulder, CO, 1998) also discusses the "borderlands" and the havoc raised there by economic dislocation, especially fluctuating exchange rates between the two countries. Finally, Sam Quinones *True Tales from Another Mexico: The Lynch Mob, the Popsicle Kings, Chalino, and the Bronx* (Albuquerque, NM: 2001) provides a reporters view of how U.S. popular culture has infiltrated and been transformed in modern Mexico.

Numerous other books and articles contributed to this research, and the bibliography contains full citations. Given the growing importance of Mexican-U.S. bilateral relations in both a hemispheric and global context, this dissertation has endeavored to update both the narrative and historiography concerning the seminal

[6] Alan Riding, *Distant Neighbors: A Portrait of the Mexicans*, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985, p xi.

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episode of the French Intervention between the two countries, and some of the long-term implications of the policies undertaken then.

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